



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### **Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### **About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

51.1 r. 34: Burdon (W.): An impartial examination of the dispute between Spain and her American colonies, by A.F. Estrada.

PRESENTED TO THE UNIVERSITY  
BY THE RHODES TRUSTEES

5

AN  
IMPARTIAL EXAMINATION  
OF  
**The Dispute**  
BETWEEN  
**SPAIN**  
AND  
HER AMERICAN COLONIES.

BY  
ALVARO FLOREZ ESTRADA.

---

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL,  
BY W. BURDON.

---

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY CHARLES SQUIRE,  
*Furnival's-Inn-Court, Holborn,*  
FOR SHERWOOD, NEELY, AND JONES,  
20, PATERNOSTER-ROW.  
1812.



B3  
NSC

Br., Low 1.10.0



## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

---

**I**N compliance with the request of my friend, I have translated his book, not because I agree with him on the subject, but because I wished to do him a kindness. From the time that I first became capable of reflection, and began to read books of travels, I formed an earnest desire to see Spain freed from her detestable government, and America free from the government of Spain; on the same principle I wished most sincerely for the independence of our American colonies, and have since been a most hearty opposer of the union with Ireland; for there is no nation under heaven, that can be called a nation, which, if left to itself,

viii            **TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.**

her present alarming difficulties ; in a short time I am sensible he will perceive that this aid is not required, that Spain is sufficient for herself, if she will exert herself, and that if she will not, she is not worthy of freedom.

*December 2, 1811.*

---

**ERRATA.**

- Page 56, l. 9, for 'the truth,' read 'this truth.'
- P. 60, l. 16, after 'Central Junta,' insert 'had.'
- P. 67, l. 16, for 'regard,' read 'disregard.'
- P. 92, l. 15, for 'opposed,' read 'opposing.'
- P. 93, l. 15, from the bottom, dele 'if.'
- P. 114, l. 11, from the bottom, dele 'which.'
- l. 3, from the bottom, dele 'those kings (masters of the army from the time of Charles the First),' and insert 'the successors of Charles I.'
- P. 115, l. 7, from the bottom, dele 'stagnation of commerce,' and insert 'loss of liberty,'—dele 'consequence,' and insert 'causes.'
- P. 116, l. 7, from the bottom, for 'four,' read 'two.'
- P. 123, for 'Santandes,' read 'Santander.'
- P. 129, l. 16, for 'capital,' read 'capitals.'

## INTRODUCTION.

---

**W**HILE there are men there will be disputes and dissensions, while men have passions there will be grounds for quarrels and injustice. To preserve peace it is sufficient to act justly, but to restore it, something more is requisite; we must convince each party of what justice dictates, for he who shews to one only the wrongs he has suffered and the rights he possesses, without reminding him of his duties, can neither intend conviction nor pacification; he means only to defend one side, and thus preserve the germ of discord, by shewing nothing but injustice on the one hand and sufferings on the other. Justice being nothing but the result of reason, whoever possesses that, clear and undisturbed, and understands the human heart, may, without much knowledge or instruction, administer justice, and know whether or not it is administered.

The desire of doing justice to both parties in this unhappy contest is the sole motive which has induced me to write the present discourse, and the sole object which I wish to fulfil.

B

Every

—Every Spaniard who loves his country must hear with grief of a considerable insurrection among the people of South America, at a time when, without their aid, it will be very difficult for the mother country to support the contest in which she is engaged. To see individuals of the same family consume themselves in civil wars, to see Spanish blood flow by the hands of Spaniards, at a time when it ought to be shed in defence of their country, to see them weaken themselves, and thus tend to aggrandize the implacable enemy of the human race, is afflicting to every Spaniard who feels for the good of his country, and there is nothing which ought not to yield to this consideration.

The subject of which I am about to treat, is not interesting to Spain alone, but to every government which is actuated by the principles of justice, but chiefly to those who have taken an active part in the struggle she is now engaged in. The experience of the evils which all Europe now suffers ought to convince every nation that no one ought to see with indifference the ruin of another; such an indifference is both pitiful and impolitic, and its consequences will be what they have always been; such an indifference would tend to sacrifice the great interests which all men ought to defend, to that mistaken pride and jealousy which most nations feel in seeing others greater than themselves, even when it does them

them no injury. Should Britain, the faithful ally of Spain, employ her services honestly in bringing about a reconciliation between the mother country and her colonies, she would contribute not a little to the furtherance of that great object to which all secondary interests ought to yield, she would cover herself with glory, she would manifest both her wisdom and sincerity, by not aiding at two objects incompatible with each other, and would thus prefer the principal to that which is only imaginary, or if real, is much inferior to the other; she would shew that a liberal policy worthy of an enlightened government does not allow her, while assisting with all her efforts a nation employed in her own defence, to protect a people who, whether justly or unjustly, are engaged in a contest against the interests of that nation.

If I succeed in explaining sincerely and honestly the injustice committed both by the Spanish government and the insurgents, it is not merely to shew them the errors they have fallen into, but to induce them to repair them. This is the sole motive which has induced me, as far as I am able, to re-unite the minds of those who ought to be in unison for the support of that cause in which it will do them so much honour to triumph. My principles on this subject, I trust, are clear, and I trust also that no one can accuse me of partiality.

As to the latter part of my discourse, I have no



thing to boast of in so difficult a subject, and in which the best informed minds have made so little progress, but the desire to excite others of more information than myself to undertake a task by which they may do a real service to all nations. Happy could I contribute to an object from which so much good might result to all those who are truly in love with liberty.

AN  
IMPARTIAL EXAMINATION,  
&c.

---

PART I.

*That which is just alone is useful; that alone is  
useful which can injure no one.*

**A**LL men, and all countries, possess the imprescriptible right of providing for their own happiness, and, consequently, remedying the evils, reforming the abuses, and improving the institutions under which they live. Whatever tends to oppose this sacred principle is the apotheosis of despotism, it is the language of tyranny, or the error of an imagination led astray by bad habits. To believe that, in order to obtain our purpose, we are allowed to employ unjust means, is the height of folly; the best cause is in danger of being lost, when reason ceases to approve the means of promoting it. Spain, oppressed by the most perfidious



dious usurpation, lost not a moment to shake off the yoke which a most audacious tyrant boasted to have imposed on her. She herself, without any other support than her virtues, without a moment's hesitation, opposed all the dangers which threatened her in the arduous task of defending the cause of humanity. From that moment she justly merited the aid of all independent men and nations; to refuse or retard it for an instant, thus suffering the time of her salvation to pass by, is equally culpable. If, however, she has the assistance but of one nation in Europe, if others did not fly to her aid the moment they heard of her generous resolution, it was because that nation is the only one in Europe not reduced under the yoke of despotism; it was because it is hardly possible to find men who are not infected by a bad education, such as was alone permitted in countries debased by the grossest prepossessions, and degraded by that despotism which alone engenders baseness, adulation, and egotism. To have any share in so glorious an enterprise ought to be the first wish of every rational being, it ought even to be the desire of those who have no higher view than their own private interest, because in consulting that alone, reason dictates to every individual that he ought to unite himself with those who are fighting against him who seeks to make himself master of all, and can only become  
become

become so by their want of unity. To keep aloof from such a contest is folly in any man, but in a Spaniard it is unpardonable.

Spain and America, under an arbitrary and corrupt government, were in the most cruel state of suffering that any nations ever experienced, when the insurrection of the peninsula first began. The convulsions of Europe since the French revolution, and the folly of an arbitrary minister, had brought the nation to the brink of a precipice, and forced it in despair to take the desperate resolution which all nations must take when they find their evils no longer supportable. The effects of a bad administration were equally felt in Spain and in America; in both countries they whose duty it was to lessen these evils contributed to increase them, being chosen by intrigue, and being without either information or honesty; and if in America, on account of its distance from the mother country, the agents of government acted with greater severity, in the metropolis from its being the residence of the court, the strokes of arbitrary power were more vehement and more frequently repeated. Since then the evils of the Spaniards in both hemispheres were the same; since they formed one people, united by all the ties which can bind men together, they were equally interested in reforming the government, and for this purpose it was requisite that they should act in concert.



concert. To attempt to separate themselves from each other, was to co-operate with the enemy, whose force, even when they were united, they could with difficulty resist. Such a proceeding was unjust, because it threatened to expose them all to the loss of their liberty; and to defend it under the pretence of liberty, is to suppose that which is not even probable; it is to take for granted that the American insurgents had nothing else in view but their liberty, it is to present the difficulty in a false light. To say that the people of America ought first to be free, and then unite themselves to the mother country, or as some pretend, support her in the present struggle, as if they had never been separated, shews either intentional wickedness, or the most gross ignorance of the human heart.

On the captivity of Ferdinand at Bayonne, and the assumption of the government by the agents of Bonaparte, the nation was left without a head. The idea of an imaginary one, whose orders were to be obeyed by representatives, and the unanimous wish of the nation to resist the odious usurpation of a tyrant, preserved the integrity of the Spanish dominions, and when the physical chain which bound them together was broken, furnished a moral one not less powerful. The Spanish people, in this alarming crisis, hastened to constitute, in every province, a supreme authority; and,

and, notwithstanding the defective title of this government, for want of the general consent, the people yielded it a prompt obedience, from the consideration that every thing should give way to the hope of saving the country, and yet this is no reason why the Juntas should not afterwards have been reformed and rendered legitimate by the regular election of the people.

The members of these bodies soon perceived the impossibility of acting with that energy and with those full powers which were requisite for saving the nation. If the formation of these authorities was sufficient to avoid *public* anarchy, it was not sufficient to secure the *government* from anarchy, for it wanted that union and harmony which were requisite for it to act with vigour. Though the Spanish nation has given many proofs of its virtue, by the maintenance of order and justice, without any other organ of the law than the reason of each individual, (a singular example in history), yet to put an end to this species of anarchy, under which it would be very difficult to expel the enemy, ought to have been the first wish of every Spaniard, and to which every other consideration should have been sacrificed. In conformity with these principles, the provincial Juntas divested themselves of an authority so liable to dazzle the human mind, and chose a supreme government, which they clothed with all the



the functions of sovereignty. The urgent circumstances of the country, the want of a single person sufficiently authorised, and the haste with which they were compelled to act, did not permit them to regulate, (as justice required) in what mode, nor by what persons they should circulate their orders through every part of the foreign dominions of Spain, for the election of representatives with that equality which justice rigorously required. Although from the unfortunate necessity with which the supreme national government, or central Junta, was so hastily formed, the Americans were not invited to send deputies to it, they could not complain, and they did not complain of their Spanish brethren, to whose provincial Juntas there was not time for more than to send their own deputies. Equally members of the same body, the two countries are equally interested in the reform of abuses, and for this purpose they ought both to be united under the same bond of law, or what is the same, of justice and equality; they ought equally to be partakers of the good and evil of their political union, and in proportion to their population, ought to have an equal share in the representative body of the nation; if particular circumstances rendered this impossible at first, as little time as possible should have been lost in admitting the Americans to the full exercise of their inalienable rights.

Although

Although the central Junta was far from being guilty of all the crimes attributed to them by ill disposed persons, it is impossible not to see, in all their actions, the effects of an illiberal government, strongly attached to their ancient prepossessions, without the energy or information requisite for making these great reforms, which were indispensable to save the nation. Immoderately subservient to the ideas of their President, the Count Florida Blanca, who, although he had suffered severely from the injustice of despotism, and was eighty years of age, had not forgotten the maxims which he held while the minister of an arbitrary power, they were far from acting with that liberality which circumstances required. Unacquainted with the fullness of those rights which belong to a people who are in a situation to renew the social compact, they could not see, that nothing could legally be enacted without the general consent, expressed by means of a national representation. To exercise the functions of sovereignty without this authority was an unjust usurpation, subject to all the complaints and ill consequences which were to follow.

The constituted authorities of Spain having long been accustomed to exercise a kind of subaltern despotism, and to see every thing flow from the monarch, looked with horror at the idea of the people having the smallest share in the formation of any legal power, or in restraining the abuses  
which



which *they* had so long committed with impunity. Under the influence of these mistaken principles, we have seen the Council of Castile constantly oppose every kind of reform, oppose whatever could contribute to enlighten the nation, and oppose upon all occasions the national representation. Interested in the preservation of all our inveterate abuses, it used every possible effort against every species of innovation. The same motives have impelled the Audiencias to a similar opposition. The conduct of the central Junta in this respect is almost inconceivable, and can no otherwise be accounted for than from the force of habit, which has almost naturalised with the Spaniards their antient abuses, but particularly the excessive power with which the tribunals of justice are invested. The greater part of our evils arose from the union of the legislative, judicial, and executive power in these bodies, who had not a single tribunal, a single captain-general of a province in Spain and America, who did not exercise them all together; without disuniting these powers, the nation could never be free, nor one single abuse be removed. The central Junta had nothing to do but to separate these, as the only means of establishing public liberty. If we consult the history of nations, we shall seldom find that a country ranks among the number of the usurpers of its liberty a foreign conqueror, or  
an

an ambitious general, who enslaves them with the power committed to him for their defence, but there is hardly to be found a single people enslaved who do not lament the arbitrary power of the public functionaries converting themselves into the instruments of despotism, who ought to be only the organs of the law. No maxim has done greater harm in Spain, than that which allows the judge to consult the spirit of the law, and become its sole interpreter; and whenever the law is not clear, nor its meaning plain and simple, the judge must inevitably become its interpreter, and that interpretation will generally be the result of his defective reason, his violent passions, or the weakness of his character, for all which the public will be the unhappy sufferers.

The council of Castile, the first tribunal of justice in the nation, and whose powers were almost unlimited, used every effort possible to prevent the formation of the central Junta, and after it was formed, recognised its power solely from necessity. Such a resistance on the part of this council to the will of the nation, to the salvation of the country, and to the dictates of justice, could not fail to be a manifest indication that it would never co-operate cordially with a government whose formation it had so strongly opposed. Policy therefore required that the Junta should attempt to diminish the excessive powers which  
that



that tribunal had accumulated in itself to the injury of the public, and to a government newly formed.

Notwithstanding these motives, notwithstanding the country was in a state of revolution, notwithstanding the eminent services, which at the commencement of it, the provincial Juntas had performed, and notwithstanding the central Junta was indebted to them for its existence, yet the ideas of prepossession and despotism overcoming those of reason, in place of diminishing the monstrous powers of the Council of Castile and the other authorities, of strengthening those of the provincial Juntas, and creating similar ones in America, it confirmed and augmented those of the former, and suffered those of the latter to continue so limited and subservient, as to render it indecorous for its members to continue in their situation, and made their office almost useless to the country. From the moment of its installation, the central Junta determined on the destruction of the provincial ones, and though it did not dare to decree this openly, it contrived so far to limit their functions as to create that disgust and opposition which it experienced from the people against all its future measures. The motive for this conduct was, that because these authorities arose immediately from the people, and were not nominated by the supreme government, they were not so subject to  
its

its will and caprice. Had the provincial Juntas been guilty of those faults, and I am far from saying they were faultless, which determined the central Junta to treat them in the way they did, its members ought to have tried to amend them, rather than to suppress them altogether, which they never attempted with the other authorities who had greater faults, and none of those splendid merits which were notorious to the whole nation, and which attempted to thwart the provincial Juntas as the Central ridiculously confessed in its regulation, dated Jan. 1, 1809, in order to depress their authority, a confession which deserves to be compared with the actual suppression of them, which afterwards happened.

In conformity to these mistaken principles, the central Junta, in place of uniting more strictly America to Spain, by authorising it to form provincial Juntas composed of individuals chosen by the natives, as the only means of putting an end to those repeated acts of injustice committed in that country by the agents of the government, determined to abolish them in the peninsula: had they acted thus, such a measure would have filled the Americans with joy, and would have put an end to all their rising discontents. The passions of men are such that it is impossible ever to find a government without some defects, but certainly a paternal government chosen by the people will  
always



always be the least defective, the most legitimate, and the most calculated to inspire confidence. This single measure would be sufficient to remove a multitude of abuses, and to avoid the possibility of faction; for these bodies properly organised would have retained the people in their allegiance to the mother country, and their thankfulness to the government, which thus shewed its regard for their prosperity and happiness, would be permanent. Although the central Junta were not so fortunate as to realise these ideas, which would have covered it with glory and confirmed its authority, we must do it the justice it deserves, by freely acknowledging the good which it really did for America, and the wisdom that is to be found in its measures.

The foreign possessions, not only of Spain, but of all other European nations, have never been considered as an integral part of the nations to which they belong. The only consideration was to keep them in a state of abject dependence, and to govern them by those mistaken principles, which hitherto the freest governments have adopted. Spain perhaps may boast, notwithstanding its despotic government, of having been more indulgent towards its colonies than any other country, ancient or modern; hence it has happened, that none have arrived at a greater degree of prosperity. Greece and Rome, in the most glorious times, held

held their colonies in a state of the most complete subjection; England, although the most free and enlightened government in Europe, never treated them with a degree of mildness and justice equal to Spain. All authors who have written on public and political laws, have maintained that people, under the system of colonization, ought not to enjoy equal privileges with the mother country. Notwithstanding a practice so consecrated by long use, and fortified by the narrow principles of all human institutions, the Central Junta, from the moment of its installation, declared America and all the foreign possessions of Spain to form an integral part of the nation, and that to ensure the enjoyment of their rights, each province should name a deputy as a member of the sovereign or representative body. Having declared that America formed an integral part of the nation, and possessed equal rights, to allow each viceroyalty to send only one deputy to the sovereign body, when every province of Spain sent two, was doing justice only by halves, and contradicted their own declaration. A similar inconsistency would have been very impolitic at any time, even laying aside the idea of its injustice; but it was unpardonable at a time when it behoved the mother country to unite the colonies to it by the closest possible ties, in order to derive from them those aids which were indispensable to her preservation in her

C

present



present arduous contest. If the nation postponed every other consideration to that of forming speedily a supreme government, for the sake of putting an end to a state, if not of anarchy, a state which at least resembled it, let it be remembered that was not the only evil which they had to remedy.

To save the nation from a yoke which it detested, to form a complete and legitimate representation, and to ensure its future liberty, by means of a just constitution, were the great objects which ought to have occupied the attention of a wise government. The Central Junta not possessing all the faculties and abilities requisite for so great and so simple a task, it was its duty to prepare for the formation of a government equal to so vast an undertaking, and to defer was to leave the country in a state of imminent peril. The first measure requisite for this purpose was to declare itself provisional, and hasten to call together the representatives of the whole nation; but the majority of its members, either seduced by the love of power, or ignorant of their duty, acted very differently.

The union of all the light and information possible was the first thing which a wise government would have aimed at, in order to facilitate their operations in circumstances so critical. Led astray by the prepossessions in which they had been

been educated, and dreading light and information as their greatest enemies, the members of the Central Junta declared open war against them, by abolishing the liberty of the press, and subjecting it to a previous and arbitrary censure, under which it had groaned during the former times of oppression. Such was the force of prepossession, that one individual of that body, in other respects a man of the greatest probity, firmly believed that the liberty of the press ought not to be established, because the Junta had no power to alter any existing law; as if it was not high time to reform abuses, or as if every individual and collective body which could abolish an evil without injury to any one, was not sufficiently authorised to do it. With views of policy so narrow and illiberal, it was not to be hoped that any measure would be adopted by that government which did not arise from those illiberal principles in which its members had been educated. Dazzled with power, they neither thought of assembling the Cortes, nor of declaring to the nation under what conditions, nor for what length of time they had received their authority, nor even of removing the individuals who had been chosen only for a certain time, after that time had expired. Such conduct caused so general a discontent, that the nation began to be persuaded that they ought no longer to submit to a government which seemed to have voted itself

C 2

perpetual;



perpetual; it shewed complete ignorance of the spirit of the revolution, and of the temper of a civilized nation, which, however far it may be behind others, cannot fail to possess many men, possessed of sufficient dignity and firmness, to reclaim the people's rights. The clamour for the Cortes, or national representation, began to be so often and so loudly repeated, that the Junta at last determined on its convocation; and yet so great was the desire to preserve its power, that it fixed the meeting at a very distant period.

It was not to be expected that philosophy could have made sufficient progress in Spain, which had so long been under an arbitrary government, to give us reason to expect any judicious reforms, such as can arise only from experience, meditation, and information. On the whole, the Junta surpassing the expectations that had been formed of it, shewed great wisdom and probity in the decree for the convocation of the Cortes as far as respects the peninsula; and although it is susceptible of many improvements, nevertheless, on the whole, it deserves great praise, and for that alone its authors merit the love and respect of their fellow citizens, or least that their errors should be considered as venial, since by that decree alone they have restored the nation to the exercise of their rights, at least placed them in a situation to regain them, a benefit which no government in  
the

the world can boast of having conferred on any nation. In this decree the Junta, omitting all the antiquated forms of feudalism, which are so general all over Europe, seemed to consider that the representation is not a privilege or patrimony granted by kings, or belonging to certain families or classes, but a right which belongs equally to every Spaniard, nor distinguished by any of the marks excepted by the law. It was determined, that the election should be made by all the natives of the peninsula, without partiality to any particular classes, and with complete equality in proportion to the population. Nothing could be more wise nor more just, and it seemed, by so beneficent a measure, as if it was determined to abolish that unjust practice, by which the higher nobility and clergy alone enjoyed the rights which belonged equally to all: such a government could hardly be ignorant that justice and necessity required the same measures towards the Americans; but by one of those unaccountable inconsistencies, which are so common among men, even when they do good for its own sake, the Central Junta did not grant to America that share in the representation she might have expected in proportion to the population of negroes and Indians; she granted it only in proportion to that of the Creoles and Europeans. Certainly, justice required that the Indians who were the true natives  
of



of the country, should enjoy the rights of citizens, and that they should be placed in a situation to become enlightened citizens, by which means alone they could become useful to their country. But considering their education, in regard to which they could hardly be considered as a civilized people, it is not altogether to be wondered that the Junta did not put them in the full enjoyment of their rights, but left it to the Cortes to determine on so delicate a matter. One thing, however, it is impossible to approve, which is that the elections were not made by the people, but by the Cabildos; for it is impossible to consider a people as free who do not enjoy this inalienable right.

If these two decrees are not consistent with the declaration of the Junta, that America should be considered as an integral part of Spain, they did not both flow from the same cause. The former arose from the Americans not having deputies in the government. The second, which perhaps would not have been altered by that circumstance, unless they had been men of probity and information, arose from the aristocratical ideas to which the Junta was so strongly inclined. The laws which ought to be the bond of union among men, and dictated solely by reason, have in general only been dictated by the passions of legislation, or if they have sometimes been just, it has arisen only from a casual or happy necessity, as in the present

present instance. Although the Junta granted that the election of representatives in the peninsula should be entirely popular, it was not without great debates, and at length was decreed more through the fear of public opinion, which was decidedly adverse to the privileged classes, than because the members desired it, or judged it conformable to reason.

Justice being no other than the application of reason to the interests of the greatest possible number of men, and these interests being always in conformity to reason, that is to obtain justice, the necessity of doing to all other nations and much more to our own countrymen, can never fail to be the fundamental maxim of every wise government. The neglect of this single principle is the origin of all those evils of which nations are guilty towards each other, and of that infallible and just reaction, which they all suffer in their turns. It is in truth hardly to be expected that they should always act in conformity to these ideas of justice, because the foresight of man is limited, and he frequently believes his happiness to consist in those things, in which he will only find his ruin, and still less to be expected, for this reason, that no one can be a good judge in his own cause; and nations have not hitherto found any just means of determining their contests with each other,



other, an undertaking which, if well performed, would immortalize a just and beneficent prince. It is not thus in the disputes between nations and their rulers, for the grounds of the quarrels are generally much more plain and intelligible, and they always possess impartial judges, who can determine according to the law, which is the great distinction between those who live under a free and an arbitrary government. The conviction that the law which was just for Spain must be the same for America, must be the result of that simple principle we have laid down; but as the Junta was evidently friendly to a representation by classes, and had been solely restrained by fear from adopting it in the peninsula, and as that motive did not operate with regard to America, they determined that it should be elected by the Cabildos, or corporate bodies; a determination the more arbitrary, because no former practice gave those bodies any claim to the privilege; whereas, in Spain, the classes which possessed the right of election had on their side a long and uninterrupted usage, which, though of no importance to a wise government when contrary to reason and utility, is for a weak and ignorant one, an idol not to be attacked or disregarded.

Although I have no intention to apologize for the errors and injustice committed by the central  
Junta,

Junta, yet, when examining its history impartially in all that concerns the present subject, I must acknowledge that the greater part of its faults arose from the persons entrusted to execute its commands. All the old authorities being accustomed to govern with arbitrary power, as the instruments of the despotism from which they received their commission, were the natural enemies of the newly constituted authorities, because they were not accustomed to obey them, and because they detested them as deriving their power from the people, whom they wished to deprive of the right of representation, and continue to hold in blind obedience. It happened therefore that the ancient authorities, from the first, looked with abhorrence on the revolution, declared the greatest aversion to the Central Junta, and disobeyed its orders on every possible occasion. The new government could not therefore, on this account, consolidate its authority, but by the means of virtues which it was far from possessing, or gaining the love of the provincial Juntas, from which it had originated, and which, notwithstanding their many defects, such as a wise and prudent government would have corrected, were much better than the ancient authorities, and possessed a much greater influence over the public opinion, as being chosen by the people, and composed of many men of considerable weight  
in

in the provinces. The Central Junta not foreseeing this, puffed up with its authority, and under the influence of the party which was hostile to every thing liberal and popular, increasing the power of the ancient authorities, and diminishing that of the Provincial Juntas, without gaining the love of the former, contracted the hatred of the latter, and from that time all the public bodies behaved to the Junta with the most undisguised jealousy; it lost all public confidence, its most equitable orders were disobeyed, its enemies openly insulted it, exposing with all possible severity both its acknowledged defects and those which were imputed to it; far from possessing energy sufficient to avenge itself, it did not even permit others to do it; and finally, all the reverses which the nation suffers, and has suffered, were attributed solely to the Junta, nor was there any species of reproach with which they were not loaded from all parts. As to the Creoles and Europeans, the Central Junta did not treat them unjustly in the representation assigned them, but in the mode of election by Cabildos, and not by the people at large as in the peninsula. These were the only classes capable of choosing their representatives, and the whole population scarcely amounts to twelve millions, the proportion of twenty representatives assigned by the  
Central



Central Junta corresponded exactly with that of the peninsula, one for each fifty thousand,

It is difficult for men who feel strongly interested on any subject to restrain themselves within just limits, for they are then guided by their imagination rather than their reason. The rumours of discontent against so feeble a government daily increased, and, as it generally happens, were magnified in proportion to the distance from whence they came, and the nation was almost in a state of anarchy. The effect of these evils was not less felt in America, where the enemy laboured with incessant activity to deprive Spain of the succours she derived from thence, in order to conquer her with the greater facility.

The party of the factious, which must ever be considerable among a people governed unjustly, failed not to realize their schemes, and hasten the explosion they had long been anticipating. On the other hand, the government had taken no means to prevent it; for besides suffering all the ancient abuses to remain, and the causes which had produced them, they added their own unjust and haughty conduct, which was at first ridiculous and at last contemptible.

The Central Junta, knowing how perilous their situation had become, were eager for the time of assembling the Cortes, which was only a month distant. As the enemies of the government  
founded



founded their aversion to it, on its opposition to reform, they were determined to oppose any other on the same grounds, even at the risk of exposing the nation to anarchy at a time when union was the most requisite. Even supposing the Junta had been the most stupid and criminal government that ever existed, considering its dissolution was so near at hand, none but fools or rogues could wish to dissolve it by force, before another government had been formed. It was certainly no fear of the evils which might arise in the short space of a month, that could have actuated the authors of so criminal a design; but an opportunity offered of realizing their schemes, and without considering the danger to which they exposed their country, they were determined to proceed.

The Junta, either from their ignorance of military affairs, or from their inability to appease the discontents of the Andalusians, in place of concentrating the remains of the army so shamefully routed at Ocaña, in some fortified part of the Sierra Morena, to be disposed of as necessity required, disposed it in an extended line along that ridge of mountains; and thus they were no where able to contend with the enemy at first, nor could they afterwards draw their forces together when required. A French army of 50,000 men forced its way into Andalusia, while the government was sending its deputies to make the requisite dispositions

sitions for hindering their passage over the Sierra. The circumstance of the journey of the commissioners at that period greatly contributed to make the people believe, that the government had an understanding with the enemy, who now hastened with all possible rapidity to Seville, then the residence of the Central Junta. The people in consequence of this news, began to be alarmed, and the Junta lost no time to remove to the island of Leon, the only place where they could be safe from the enemy, and where within five or six days they were to resign their power to the representatives of the nation. Acting upon this occasion with their usual weakness, in place of quitting Seville in a body, with an escort of troops, (and two hundred would have been sufficient to protect them from insult), they determined to depart separately, leaving behind them an executive commission till their arrival in the island.

Although the terror which took possession of these men on the first news that the French had passed the Sierra, their surprise and their shameful flight were sufficient to prove that they had no correspondence with the enemy, yet the factious, on perceiving that the commission had also fled, found it no difficult matter to convince the people, who are on these occasions generally the victims of their ignorant credulity, that the government had sold the country, that they held  
intelligence

intelligence with the enemy, and had squandered the treasures of the nation. The effect of these rumours was the formation of the Junta of Seville, which declared itself supreme, and circulated orders throughout the kingdom, that every province should send deputies to choose a regency. The malcontents, however, could not obtain their ends till they could hinder the union of the Central Junta at Leon; for this purpose they sent commissioners to Cadiz, and wherever they conceived the Junta were to be found, with verbal and written orders to apprehend and assassinate them as well as all who should afford them protection. The president and vice-president having arrived at Xeres, after these commissioners, with difficulty found means to save their lives. Those who arrived at Cadiz were obliged to conceal themselves, and leave it clandestinely for the Isle of Leon. Those who arrived at Puerto, and other places, shared no better lot. In short, these wretches, whose only crime was their contemptible debility, found no where any certain refuge. The passions of their numerous enemies having gained the multitude on their side, discharged all their resentment at these unfortunate men. The papers published at Seville and circulated over the kingdom were full of nothing but abuse of them, and whoever ventured on their defence was considered as a traitor. Finally, the public anarchy



chy and exultation was carried to such a pitch, that the day of their flight was styled in all the public papers *The Grand Day of Seville*, as if they had gained a victory over their enemies; such was the ascendancy of faction, and such the stupidity of the people.

At length, however, after great risks and difficulties, the Junta assembled in the island of Leon, yet they had not sufficient energy to retain their power for the few days which remained before the assembling the Cortes, and without the consent of the nation they secretly and clandestinely chose a regency composed of five individuals, four for Spain and one for America, who, notwithstanding the private virtues they might possess, were wholly unequal to discharge the office with which they were to be entrusted. Without possessing the power to make them recognized as legitimate, they put them into the exercise of their functions, and then determined that they, and the regency too, should immediately quit the place in order to avoid the popular resentment. No person of sense or judgment would have refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of this new executive, since the worst government in the world is better than anarchy, but the factious are seldom without specious pretexts to cover their iniquitous designs. Such have been the causes that produced such dismal effects in America.

Although

Although it would have been more regular to have related the conduct of the regency towards America in this first part of my discourse, not to interrupt the chronological order of events, yet I have thought it better first to give an account of the insurrection in the Caraccas and Buenos Ayres, and then to explain the measures of the regency.

## PART II.

**T**HE orders so imprudently communicated to the nation by the Junta of Seville, stiling itself supreme; the news of the government being dissolved, which was sent by private letters to America; the abusive papers against the Junta, printed at Seville on the 24th and 25th of January; the news of the disastrous defeat of the army at Ocaña; the invasion of Andalusia by the French; the sudden formation of a new government at Seville, with all the marks of illegality; the silence which was observed relative to the Central Junta having again assembled in the Isle of Leon; the reports that the Provincial Juntas had refused to acknowledge the regency;—all these events communicated in different ways, and received at one time in America, unavoidably produced a very unfortunate effect on the minds of the people, and gave the insurgents that opportunity they had so long sought for, to put their schemes in execution. The inhabitants of Cadiz, to avoid the disasters of anarchy with which they were threatened, and the approach of the enemy, created a new Junta, which, having for a few days delayed to acknowledge the regency, aggravated

D

the



the evils that were experienced both in Spain and America. The provinces, finding that the authority, chosen by the people of that city where the Central Junta resided, had refused to acknowledge the regency, soon followed its example. Although the Junta of Cadiz laid an embargo on all the vessels that were about to sail for America, till public affairs should wear a better aspect; when that time arrived, they neglected to stop all vessels but the packets, in order to shew that a legal and acknowledged government was established. The same day on which the first packet sailed for America, the ports were opened for all other vessels, without its being considered that they might arrive there first, and cause that confusion which had before so wisely been foreseen.

In fact, a private vessel called the *Carmelite*, arrived at Porto Cabello on the 15th of April, and the day following letters were received at Caraccas, containing accounts of all that happened, and immediately all those who felt any resentment at the injustice of the ancient authorities; all the enemies of the old government, who were not a few, and the friends of reform, who were many, perceiving that the time was arrived for executing the schemes they had long been devising, under the plausible pretext of the public good, began to propose those reforms, which, if not dictated by  
their

their passions, were not the dictates of justice and benevolence.

On the night of the 17th of April a packet from the Spanish government arrived at Guayra, and on the 18th, in the morning, the whole people were informed of the establishment of the regency chosen by the Central Junta, by means of official papers, by private correspondence, and by the commissioners of the government. Notwithstanding this information, and although the principal motive which the factions alleged for raising the people, was the anarchy and total ruin of the mother country, (having suborned or persuaded the principal officers of the troops to be of their party) on the 19th, in the morning, when General D. Vincente Emperan entered the cathedral for divine service, they seized him and threatened his life if he attempted to resist, conducted him to the consistory, where the members of the Cabildo were assembled, and there compelled him to resign his command, a strong proof of the violence with which they acted, and of the means which, in imitation of Napoleon, they took to dazzle and deceive the multitude. Had the people resumed the sovereign authority, and not suffered themselves to be led by a faction, it would have been not only superfluous to deprive the general of his authority, but injurious and impolitic, because it would have made it appear as if this must of

D. 2

course

course precede the exercise of their inalienable rights, which, when it proceeded from force, rendered all that resulted from it null and void. Supposing the people not to have resumed their authority, then whatever they did was oppression and injustice, and the renunciation of the General's authority could not be legalized by force.

The former authorities being all deprived of their power, it was supposed to reside, *per interim*, in the corporation, till every province should name deputies to form the new government; a remedy was indispensable to palliate the illegitimacy which it only the more exposed, as it shewed that it had been formed without the intervention of those whose consent was requisite for its establishment, except in a case of urgency, such as that of the Peninsula. But Caraccas could plead no such urgency, it could neither pretend the dread of anarchy, nor the immediate presence of an enemy, who at the distance of two thousand leagues could cause it no alarm. The new Junta, under this pretext however, pretended to take all these means for its safety, and though the pretence was most notoriously false, it was sufficient to shew that its determinations, so far from resting upon true and certain data, rested only on voluntary suppositions, such as can never be the foundations of justice and liberty. Lastly, in place of marking its first decrees with the only stamp which could characterise it as a just government,



vernment, and its desires of liberty as sincere, and in place of stamping them with that moderation, which is the sum of all the virtues, without any other motive than that of forming partisans, it conferred distinctions with profusion, gave away employments already filled, created offices from pride, rather than necessity: at its first outset it shewed every sign of wishing to become an independent country. Few men are to be found of sufficient probity to yield up their honours or their pay, solely for the public good, yet it is by no means difficult to disguise the dictates of the passions under that pretence.

The people of Caraccas, not satisfied with making innovations, which tended to separate them from the mother country, attempted to draw over to their party all the provinces near them, either by threats or seduction. Their conduct in this respect cannot be justified, even by their greatest admirers; for if they possessed a right to make those reforms in their government which they judged convenient, others possessed the same right to choose that side which they preferred: to attempt either to compel or seduce them, was a direct violation of their liberty. The civil contentions, and the arrest of several deputies in different parts of the country, are proofs that they acted against the will of the people, without which they could have no right to make them  
free,

free, for no man possesses a right to do evil to another for the sake even of a certain good.

To the insurrection of Caraccas succeeded that of Buenos Ayres, though with all outward signs of justice and generosity. The events of the Peninsula, prior to the installation of the regency, being known in that city before they received that news, the Cabildo convoked the people on the 22d of May, and after a long discussion it was determined that the authority of the viceroy should be delegated to a Provincial Junta, till another was formed by deputies from the different provinces, which should be considered as a legitimate representative of the sovereign. On the 8th of June it was decreed that the regency should be acknowledged as soon as the news of its installation arrived. Nothing could be more just and moderate than these proceedings, but the sequel did not correspond with the commencement.

It seemed by no means difficult after all this, that the regency of Spain should be acknowledged, and that should any ground of dissention arise, it might be amicably settled, without proceeding to an open rupture, so contrary both to prudence and the interest of both countries, and yet a different result might have been foreseen by any one well acquainted with human passions, and the irritated temper of the inhabitants. In proportion to the increase of power, the desire of it



it increases, and though success might seem to satiate it for a time, yet in public bodies it is almost inextinguishable. Doubts began to be raised as to the legitimacy of the regency, because a pretext was wanted to deny its authority. The Junta therefore forgot the unfortunate and compulsive circumstances, under which the regency had been formed, and without any consideration of the afflicted state of the mother country, forgetting those sentiments of magnanimity which ought to have restrained them from acts of vengeance against the unfortunate, thought only of retaliating the injuries they had received from the former government of Spain. It was thus that, being actuated solely by their evil passions, and a mistaken idea of their true interest, the people of Buenos Ayres suffered themselves to be hurried into acts of open rebellion. The imprudence of the regency, who, so far from attempting to soothe the angry spirits of the Americans, adopted measures the most illiberal, and caused the germ of discontent, which had long been fermenting in all parts of America, to burst forth, and little hopes of reconciliation with the mother country remained.

A slight glance at the conduct of the regency will be sufficient to convince us of this truth. If the Central Junta was to blame for not establishing popular governments in America, for not allowing



allowing a sufficient number of representatives, for not having caused the elections to be in the hands of the people, by which means the continent of America would have been more strictly united to Spain, and a revolution might thus have been spared, the regency were infinitely more culpable. The former was to be blamed for not avoiding an evil, with which it was not fully acquainted, the latter fomented it, and exasperated those whom it ought to have soothed. The former conceded to America a representation, though defective, and refused not to listen to its demands; the latter turned a deaf ear to its complaints, and so far from mitigating its evils, pursued a route the most directly opposite.

The regency conducting itself, from the moment of its installation to the last of its authority, without the smallest discretion, can hardly be said to have adopted one measure which did not manifest both partiality and injustice. Notwithstanding the mournful lesson afforded by the Central Junta, it thought of nothing but preserving its power, and consequently acting with the most gross illiberality. Blindly led by ministers, who were incapable of knowing the delicacy required in public affairs, and by the council of Castille, the regency, which had most constantly opposed every species of reform, but particularly those which had a tendency to the popular system, attempted

attempted to suppress those which circumstances had produced and time only was requisite to complete. The regency, in place of executing and even of improving, as they had promised, the dispositions of the Junta relative to the national representation, forgetting the fulfilment of this sacred duty, neglected to send to America any orders on that account. Probably, had they done as they ought, by sending them in the packet which carried the news of their installation; even had it been no more than was granted by the Central Junta, they would have avoided the insurrection of Buenos Ayres, and of all America.

When the news of the events which had taken place in Caraccas was received by the regency, so far from guarding against a civil war, by acceding to the just propositions made by the members of that Junta, in their letter of the 20th of May, addressed to the Marquis de las Hormazas, the minister of Finance, they decreed, without attending to the principle of justice or the state of the Peninsula, that measures should be taken to reduce them by force, declared the port of Guayra in a state of blockade, and commissioned a counsellor and other officers with full powers to reduce them to submission, and to adopt the means usually employed by despotic governments for that purpose. To the news of the disturbances in Caraccas succeeded that of Buenos Ayres, and the regency adopted



adopted the same method toward the south as they have taken in the north of America: such measures, besides being contrary to justice, the regency possessed no means of enforcing, and therefore they only served the more to exasperate the discontents, and to give fresh grounds of complaint to those who begun an enterprise from which men are seldom found to desist. To this was unfortunately added a most scandalous circumstance, which discovering either the weakness or the inconsistency of the regency, increased the motives of disgust and want of confidence with the Americans. The regency, in consequence of an expedient designed by the Central Junta, but not put in execution from the disturbed state of the Peninsula, granted the freedom of commerce to America, or at least sent orders to that effect signed by the secretary of finance.

The Junta of Cadiz, composed chiefly of men who were interested in the monopoly established by the old government, and of which they had so long participated, were alarmed at this decree, and lost no time to remonstrate against the order. The regency, which had always dreaded this Junta, on account of its great influence with the people, denied the whole affair, whether truly or not it is difficult to determine, and ordered every means to be taken for discovering the authors of the decree, which could be none but themselves

or



of their secretary, for he did not venture to deny his own hand-writing at the bottom. So shameful a proceeding, which so much discredited the government, was another powerful obstacle to a reconciliation with America. A matter of so great importance, and so justly desired by them, being thus imprudently conducted, could not fail to irritate them and make them consider as vain all the promises of the Spanish government.

Let us now turn to the conduct of the Americans, and view the question with impartiality, that is without suffering it to rest upon unauthorised suppositions. Before all things it is requisite to know, *Whether the object of the revolution was the liberty of the people?* and, secondly, *Whether this ought to be obtained by the means which reason and justice require, or it is allowable to adopt any means that may be supposed conducive to the purpose?* and, lastly, *Whether the motives alleged by the Americans were their real motives or not?*

To determine the first question it is requisite that we should be acquainted with the intentions of its authors, or at least that we should form our opinion of them from their conduct. If liberty and justice are nothing more than mere words, we have nothing else to do than to apply these words to whatever suits us; but if they both mean the same thing, and are both subject to the laws of reason, or what is the same, to private  
interest

interest well understood, then in order to say whether a man acts justly or unjustly, we must determine what is meant by these words, without which it is impossible to form a certain and impartial judgment.

The first law which the author of nature has implanted in man is that of self preservation, or happiness. According to this law (superior to all others) all societies have an unalienable right to change their form of government, to choose their own rulers, and to depose them when necessity requires it, and this same law applies equally to individuals as to nations, to the governed, as to governors: it admits no exception, nor dispensation, and whatever is done contrary to it, either by an individual or a nation, is null and void: the law of general utility ought to be the basis of all civil society. For this reason the people themselves have no right to make any change in the government which is not evidently conducive to the general good. According to these principles, which are so clear and so conformable to reason, we must insist, that if the insurrection of America was directed by any other motive than that of its happiness, it cannot be approved by any just and impartial man. To determine therefore whether the cause of the Americans is just or unjust, we must, before all things, enquire whether or no its object was public liberty.

Nothing



Nothing has been more common at all times, and particularly in the present, than to profane the most sacred words. *The liberty of the people, The reform of abuses, and The regeneration of the state,* is the language which is constantly used by the good and the bad, by philosophers of all ages, by tyrants and demagogues of all nations. By some these words are used in their true sense, to shew men the true road to happiness, by others only to fascinate them with the seductive semblance of good, in order more surely to enslave them. Should we give credit to words alone, nations would for ever be the victims of those demagogues who possessed the greatest powers of eloquence; but we must attend to facts, in order to discriminate between those who wish to instruct, and those who wish to deceive us.

The news which excited the insurrections of Caraccas and Buenos Ayres being received in those two capitals, we have seen that new authorities were immediately chosen (we will suppose) by the majority of the inhabitants, which acquiring power by these means, and possessing themselves of the public force, without hoping to be recognised freely by the natives of the respective provinces, and without any immediate danger which threatened the country to justify their conduct, began to make reforms and to enact new laws just as they pleased. Let us say nothing  
about



about motives which did not exist, and which these deputies pretended, in order to justify themselves for having so hastily assumed the supreme power, such as the dangers of the country and the fear of an enemy at such a distance, how can it be justified that so small a number of the inhabitants of those cities should take upon them to make such great and essential reforms in the government? On what principle could the will of so small a number impose the severest penalties on those who refused to obey their laws and recognise their authority? If the government, or sovereign power, cannot be established without a tacit or expressed agreement between the governors and the governed, how can the partisans of the Americans shew, that without this agreement their insurrection is any other than a factious combination? It is not requisite that blood should be shed to give them that character. Napoleon drew no blood when he overturned the Council of Five Hundred. The true sovereignty cannot be acquired without the consent of the people. The Americans, notwithstanding they at first acknowledged the necessity of this consent, neither took care to obtain it, nor were hindered from making laws without it. If such a government is not in truth a state of violence and faction, it is difficult to know what it is that deserves those names. Though the friends of liberty  
and

and humanity may wish that the Americans and all the nations of the world should be free; though they may say that they were oppressed; in which I will agree with them; and though they may believe that they had a right to attempt to improve their institutions, and to avail themselves of the first opportunity which offered, they cannot, on that account, say that the Americans have made any progress towards liberty, or that their conduct has not been the result of passion rather than of reason. If liberty consists in doing whatever is not forbidden by wise and just laws, ignorance or partiality alone can maintain, that the union of a few families of Carraccas or Buenos Ayres can dictate laws to the majority of their fellow citizens, and change the form of government, without deserving the name of a faction or conspiracy; nor if the laws were ever so good, can they fail to be the laws of tyrants, when they have no sanction but that of men who are not duly authorised to promulgate them. Napoleon himself, both in France and Spain, has enacted many laws, which no man of probity and information could find fault with, and yet they are the laws of a tyrant, and submitted to only from a sense of violence and oppression.— Neither is it credible that these new authorities could pretend that they had the consent of the people, when, finding that neither their manifestoes

festoes not the persuasions of their agents, could produce the effect they desired, they determined to make them submit by an armed force. The most determined tyrant could not act in a mode more opposite to liberty.

Let us now pass to the second question, viz. Whether liberty must be imparted according to the rules fixed and determined by reason, or it is allowable to adopt whatever means are supposed to be conducive to that end? No contract can be valid which does not impose mutual obligations. The social compact supposes two parties, the governors and the governed, on each of whom is imposed a different set of duties, submission on the one side to good laws, and on the other, an ardent desire of public good: on this depends the force of government and the happiness of the state. The same supreme law of utility which dictates the establishment of a government and a sovereign authority subject to certain conditions, requires perhaps more strongly that that government and that sovereign authority should be permanent; I say *more strongly perhaps*, because men will constantly be less unhappy under even a despotic government, than in a state of anarchy, and we shall constantly find, that in that state the people will frequently through caprice, and without any just motive, change the form of government and depose their rulers. To make government



ment thus depend on the inconstancy of the people, would leave them without any government at all, and a state thus left in a continual state of vacillation would become feeble, and without energy, and finally perish. Every individual therefore, and every people which thus opposes the sovereign power, is guilty of the greatest crime which a man can commit, because he attacks the foundation of public happiness, in which is comprehended that of every individual. But as the people possess an undoubted right to resist and to depose the sovereign power whenever it openly degenerates into tyranny, or when it manifestly threatens the ruin of the country, it is requisite, in order that neither party should suffer from the extreme on either side, that there should be a fixed and invariable rule to direct them in circumstances so arduous. On the one hand, it is the duty of citizens to bear with the lesser faults of the supreme power, and to consider the weakness of human nature and the difficult duties it has to fulfil; and that without such a power no nation can be happy. And yet there are in all societies discontented and seditious persons who wish to magnify into acts of injustice the most venial offences of the sovereign power; the people generally murmur against every imposition of taxes, and some men exert all their force to pull down the government, in hopes to have a share of

E

it

it themselves. In one word, if it were possible to read the human heart, we should see that every one of us wishes to be exempt from those laws which bind our fellow citizens, that we are all inclined to reclaim from the sovereign power that portion of liberty which every member of civilised society must surrender, for the sake of preserving the remainder. In such circumstances what does reason dictate to us? No other than that the majority of society, or its representatives, should resolve and determine upon every reform. Whatever change of government is otherwise produced, is the effect of faction and violence; whatever is obtained by mere force of arms, however excellent it may be, since it is not voluntary, cannot be legal nor free. It is thus that tyrants acquire their rights, and pretend that the people regain their liberty. The insurgents of America have hitherto used only these means, and have acquired no better title to their power than these can confer.

The innovators, who consisted of a very small portion of the inhabitants of Caraccas and Buenos Ayres, without any other authority than their own will, but if we must believe them by the consent of the majority, though it is by no means probable, considering the numbers of those who emigrated, of those who were put under arrest, and of those who remained inactive, this handful  
of

of insurgents dictated laws to three parts of the American population, to a third part of the negroes, and a very large number of Europeans: and, notwithstanding all this, there are men who will undertake to defend their conduct.

To say nothing about the want of a free representation, without which the whole was violence and force, let us suppose that the insurgents acted under full powers from the inhabitants of America, even in that case their conduct was most unjustifiable. The law of nature requires that a man should be faithful to his contracts and obligations, and the greater the injury he does to another by violating these engagements, the more he is criminal. The Peninsula determined to resist the shameful yoke which the merciless ruler of France sought to impose on it, and not a single people of the new world failed to applaud her generous resolution; there was not one who did not manifest the same noble sentiments, all seemed to exhaust their ideas in seeking for terms to shew the interest, the enthusiasm, and the concern they took in all her struggles and difficulties. Individuals strove to give all the assistance in their power to their brethren in Spain, who, impelled solely by their virtues and heroism, faced every terror rather than submit to a base servitude, which, in descending to their families, would extend also to the Americans. Not a single province of America



which did not stimulate the Spaniards to pursue their glorious and arduous course, assuring them that nothing should be wanting which they could afford, that they would never separate themselves from the mother country while there remained a spot in the Peninsula which acknowledged the Spanish government; finally, that even in the utmost extremity of distress, America was the country of the Spaniards equally with the Peninsula, and that, under the greatest reverses, they would there find a place of refuge where they might be more happy than when divided from each other. Justice, and generosity equally dictated this line of conduct, and this promise, spontaneously given, because the human heart cannot avoid shewing its feelings when they become excessive, at the same time that it inspired the most tender and benevolent sensations, imposed the most sacred obligations. To say nothing about the ties which united America to Spain before the revolution, let us suppose, that by the captivity of the royal family of Spain the social compact was completely broken; as soon as the Americans were informed of what had passed, as soon as they approved the determination of the mother country, as soon as they spontaneously gave these promises, did they not at the same moment renew the bonds which united them to Spain in the strongest way possible? What history shews us the

the example of a nation which formed such a contract, under conditions more express, more voluntary, more just, and more obligatory? Let us examine a little into the nature of this contract, what are the conditions it contains, if they have been observed, or who has failed in their observance.

By the single voluntary act of recognising the government of the mother country, the Americans indubitably renewed the social bond which united them to Spain; that is, they allowed that they were members of the same political family, or that they formed one society, which is the first contract; but the approbation which they spontaneously shewed of the determination of the Spaniards to resist the tyrant, and their repeated promise to aid them in the contest, were a second and a different obligation. As to the first, its conditions are those which are always either expressed or implied in contracts of that nature, and which no nation can ever renounce; to wit, that the governors will do every thing to promote the happiness of the governed, and that they in return will yield them obedience while they continue to promote the public good. The contract commenced immediately on America having recognised the new government of the mother country, and from that moment all the oppressions and exactions which America had before suffered could



could not be alleged as a cause of dissolving it. The arbitrary acts of power and injustice committed by the agents of government in the colonies are too true, particularly during the administration of Godoy. Humanity would shudder at the recital of the calamities occasioned by the despotism of viceroys and ministers of justice. Every honest Spaniard would, at that time, have rejoiced if America could have shaken off the yoke of a monarch who exhausted her treasures solely for the purpose of enriching a profligate minister. The cause of liberty is so congenial to man, that it interests not only those who enjoy it, but the whole of mankind, and none who have it in their power can refuse to afford their aid to those who are persecuted unjustly. For the Americans to allege their former oppression as a pretext for their present insurrection, is to complain of grievances to those who have not committed them. As far as respects the Central Junta, it must be allowed that they did not fulfil their duty to the Americans, but their faults were only those of omission. It is true they did not grant them a proper share in the representation; they committed no active injustice, but they failed to do them complete justice; this, however, was no sufficient ground for a complete rupture between the two countries, because it might have become the subject of mutual explanation. As to  
the



the regency, the Americans had no cause of complaint anterior to their insurrection: What just motives then can they allege for that measure? I perceive no others than those of force, but although this law has hitherto prevailed among men, it does not follow that it ought.

Let us suppose, however, that the Americans were provided with sufficient powers; that the government of the mother country had given them sufficient motives for separation; let us suppose that, having tried all possible means of conciliation, they could not obtain it; and that in this case they attempted (as justice permitted them) to become independent; even supposing all this, could the friends of liberty, and those who boast of defending, in all cases, the rights of the people, approve the conduct of the American insurgents? Let us be just and consistent with our own principles. We can only be at war with despotism, or with despots; supposing the first, the Americans have gained nothing, for they have not destroyed despotism; they have changed their government it is true, but I see no proof that they will be treated with greater mildness than by their former masters. They have been fighting with each other for the change of a Sultan, but not for their liberty. Let us not deceive ourselves: to be free it is not sufficient to overthrow the despot who oppresses us, we must destroy despotism  
itself,

itself, and for this purpose we must not employ despotic means. Let us not seduce our imaginations in the cause of liberty, by supposing that avowed despots alone are capable of committing acts of tyranny; all men will be despots when they can be so with impunity. France herself, whose revolution ought to be a school for us, if we wish to conduct ourselves differently, will convince us of the truth. I should not now have had to lament her unhappy lot, had she been convinced that she gained nothing by removing the Directory to put at the head of her government another ruler with unlimited power. This ought to teach us distrust of all those to whom we blindly commit the reins of government, and to shew that the remedy for our evils consists not in the nature of our governors, but of the government. It ought to convince us how dangerous it is to give political power to bold, crafty, and powerful military leaders, whose education has taught them only blind obedience and unlimited command. It ought to convince us how easily men of that description, from being sought as the defenders of a country, become its tyrants. Caraccas, to whom these reflections chiefly apply, ought to remember that such adventurers are the only persons who profit by such revolutions.

The second contract between the Americans and the Spaniards is also in some measure a new one.



one. It is an alliance in which the Americans bind themselves, in a mode the most explicit and solemn, to support the Spaniards in the war against France. History offers, in my opinion, no example of a similar alliance between individuals of the same nation; on this account I say that it is in some measure of a new species. The sentiments of exalted patriotism, and the voice of justice, which is the same in men of all countries, when the passions are silent, led the Americans to sympathise with the Spaniards, and to express the same feelings; they declared the obligation that existed between individuals of the same nation to assist each other in all cases of public calamity. Whenever any public body fails to perform an engagement of this sort, it is guilty of the utmost injustice, and suffers its honour and reputation to be tarnished for ever. Nevertheless, how common is it for nations to commit acts of injustice against each other, and how common for governments to laugh at the solemnity of treaties, and to believe that it is sound policy to acknowledge no other law but that of force; though they pretend to act otherwise, conscious of the contempt they would suffer from the violation of their word on such occasions. The Americans, by their insurrection against the mother country, if we regard nothing more than the obligations which resulted from their express or tacit



tacit contract, violated most basely the double alliance they had contracted under conditions the most sacred, the most generally approved, and consequently the most just that ever were agreed on. Patriotism and reason had formed it, with the applause of all mankind, in times of tranquillity and enthusiasm; it was violated by passion and irreflection in times of agitation, to the grief and shame of all those who truly love their country, and never listen to private feelings in times of public difficulty.

In this alliance the Americans contracted an obligation with all and every one of the Spaniards, but principally with the government; I speak of the promise which they gave to aid them in their present contest. At the moment of their insurrection they virtually refused to fulfil so solemn a promise, for which no sufficient excuse could be given while the Peninsula continued the contest with France. A line of conduct so unjust is another proof of the bad cause which the Americans have embraced. Let us see what motives they have alleged to justify themselves. Their first pretence is founded on a manifestly false assertion; they pretended that the government was completely dissolved, and the whole Peninsula in possession of the French: so unfounded a supposition could hardly be believed by its authors. The vessels which had brought the news  
of

of the invasion of the French could not have sailed from ports in their possession ; and although it might be presumed that they were likely to fall into their hands, it could not be asserted that they were actually in their possession. The supposition was both false and ridiculous, and might as well have been alleged at the commencement of the contest, from the presumption that the Spaniards could not long resist so powerful an enemy. To be impartial, we must confess the bad faith of the Americans in pretending to have received news by means of vessels, whose very departure from Spain was a proof that it was false. It is evident therefore that the report arose, not from mistake, but from perfidy or intrigue. Another motive alleged for their insurrection was the want of a due share in the representation, which we have already noticed. And here all those who pretend to be advocates for the right of the people expatiate with the greatest satisfaction ; but a moment's reflection will convince any one that this was not the true motive by which the Americans were actuated. Had the Supreme Junta acted as wisely in all its measures as in that which determined the relative numbers of representatives for Spain and America, most of the charges that were urged against them would have been unfounded, notwithstanding the Americans may say, that by that act they only granted them their  
liberty



liberty in shew and not in reality. "*What are twenty-four representatives for twelve millions of people, when the mother country has one for every fifty thousand? Is that the equality, the independence which they pretend to give us, who are an integral part of the Spanish nation? Who ever talked of giving the Americans the liberty which they deserve?*" All this seems very just at the first view, and to be the sentiments of men impressed with due notions of justice and philanthropy; but, after a little examination, it will be found that their reasoning is very weak, that the data on which they proceed is very insufficient to warrant the resolution that was taken by the Americans.

If the clamours against the government of the Central Junta consisted only in censuring their extreme weakness, in not attempting to diminish the arbitrary power of the old authorities, in not establishing popular authorities in America, in not hastening to convoke the Cortes, in not admitting the liberty of the press rather than restraining it afresh, in not forming a constitution as the means of putting an end to all discontent, and without which every government will in time become arbitrary, in not hastening the means of arming the people as the safety of the nation required; had their clamours and complaints extended no farther than to these things, they would have been just and well founded. But they ought not,



not, for these things, to have attributed to them injustice, which they did not commit.

America, whose population consists of near fifteen millions, has eight millions of Indians, four of Negroes, and the rest Creoles and Europeans. The Indians and the negroes are in a state of incivilization, incapable of making a proper use of their political rights. Without education or information, and without morals, it was extremely doubtful whether they ought immediately to have been put in possession of their rights as citizens, when the whole benefit of it would have been enjoyed by the Creoles and Europeans, since it is certain that they would not have chosen representatives out of their class, nor if they had, would they have been fit for the office. We see then, that the friends of liberty, who complain of this class not being represented, cannot be sincere in their wishes, because we have proved that they are not fit to elect a representation; on the other hand, were it allowed that the right ought to have been granted to the Indians, who are much superior to the Negroes, it is not clear that the Junta, as a provisional government, had a right to grant them. As to the Negroes, the grant of such a right would have immediately freed them from a state of servitude; and although I consider this state as one of the greatest abuses ever invented by man, nevertheless I conceive it could not have  
 been

been not suddenly abolished, without exposing America to the risk of much confusion, and giving room to their masters to say that they had been deprived of a property which they acquired under the sanction of the laws, which ought never to have a retroactive effect, to the injury of a third person. The traffic in slaves ought first to have been abolished, and then no man could say that he was aggrieved, because no man would have been deprived of his property. In what regards the Creoles and Europeans, the Central Junta did not treat them unjustly in the representation assigned them, but in the mode of election, by Cabildos, and not by the people at large, as in the Peninsula; these were the only classes capable of choosing their representatives, and their numbers scarcely amounting to twelve millions, the allowance of twenty-four representatives correspond exactly with the proportion allowed to the Peninsula.

However the other nations of Europe may pride themselves on their information and their liberty, the Spanish government was the first to break the chains of their colonies, by declaring that they formed an integral part of the nation, and granting the same rights as those of the mother-country to all who were capable of enjoying them. Let it now be asked, "*Who ever attempted to give the Americans liberty?*" And who will dare to say "*That these natives must expect their liberty from some*



*some other nation, for the Spanish government, superstitious and despotic, thinks only of holding them in dependence and oppression.* Even the freest nations never granted, indiscriminately, to every individual, the right of representation, which is very different from civil rights. The law, in every well-constituted state, never fails to require certain qualifications for the enjoyment of political liberty. It requires either a certain age, a certain independence of property, or a certain moral capacity. And because the Central Junta did not grant the right of representation to men who are actually disqualified for it, though they granted it to all those classes whom they conceived able to enjoy it in an equal proportion to the Spaniards of the Peninsula, can it be borne, that it should be said, "*They never attempted to give the Americans liberty.*"

Let us, however, abandon the severe language of justice which, as it shews every one their duties and their faults, can please but a few, and few there are that give ear to it, and still fewer who have sincerity enough to follow its dictates. Let us say no more about contracts and obligations; a dry subject, and little understood by the multitude, however clearly it may be explained. Let us speak only of those laws against whose infraction, honour, generosity, and all the social virtues, and even pride, cries aloud.

Whenever



Whenever a citizen, who has been ill treated and oppressed unjustly by his government, resolves to abandon his country, should it at that moment be invaded by a powerful enemy, and unable to resist without the aid of all its citizens, ought he to leave it in such circumstances? If he is alive to the feelings of honour, if he possesses a single spark of generosity, can he hesitate a moment to forget his resentment, and fly to the aid of his country? In the eyes of all those who know the duties which that sacred name imposes, would he not pass for a traitor and a villain? What man of sensibility can fail to admire the virtuous Themistocles ready to sacrifice his life to avoid the dire alternative of being unthankful to his benefactor, in refusing to accept the rank of a general, or fighting against his country, who had driven him from her bosom, for no other crime than that of being wise and virtuous. And shall Caraccas and Buenos Ayres possess so little virtue, as to abandon their country, whatever may be their grounds of complaint, when they find her in the greatest affliction, and struggling for the cause of mankind, shall they, at such a time, desert her and become her greatest enemies? Had they freely represented their grievances, and been rudely repulsed, justice might, perhaps, have allowed them to establish their independence, and to separate from the mother country; but even in that case,

case, generosity would have required that they should forbear to do so till she had been freed from her implacable enemy.

But, above all, Americans, shall your brethren in Spain say to you, What is it that you claim? Do you wish for nothing more than to be free? or do you wish for freedom, separated from us, and without taking any interest in our liberty?— Let us be sincere, let us forget what is past; a new order of things has arisen, which requires a change of system; let us forget for ever a language inconsistent with our present interests; let us come to a reconciliation, which may set at rest every cause of dissention, and unite us more strongly than ever. Suffer not yourselves to be seduced by those who, interested in our ruin, in order to rule over us both when we are most feeble, remind you of the grievances you suffered under the old government, who talk to you only of imaginary felicity, and, under the specious veil of liberty, approve your past conduct, and forget to remind you of the duties which belong to all nations, and to shew you the horrors which the excess of your passions may tempt you to commit. The true friend of virtue is he who can keep no terms with vice, and attacks injustice wherever he finds it; but he who is only severe to one party and indulgent to the other, who passes over in silence the defects of the one and

F

exposes

exposes those of the other, although he may speak the truth, speaks it only by halves, and that half which suits his purpose; and although he loves your liberty, loves more our separation, in which he fancies he sees his own interest.

But let us speak no longer of duties; justice is altogether on your side, but generosity cannot approve your conduct. It would be ungenerous, after having suffered for three hundred years all the evils with which despotism overwhelmed you, while you were united to the mother country only by force, and served only to satisfy its ambition at the moment when you were about to become one nation with us; at that moment when the government had spontaneously granted those rights, which no nation ever regained without bloodshed; at the moment when you had promised to remain united to us, in order to complete the greatest and noblest undertaking in which men were ever engaged; at the moment in which we were about to enjoy, for the first time, the privileges of freedom, and to become the greatest empire on the globe, without conquest and without usurpation; at the moment when, to obtain all these great objects, nothing more was requisite than to act in concert; at that moment could you separate yourselves from us, that, being weak and divided, we might fall the prey of one or of many tyrants?—Could you not  
remember



remember that you were indebted to that country from whence you sprung, to those Spaniards whose descendants are now shedding their blood to obtain their liberty, which they cannot without your aid? Can you have so little generosity as to abandon us in such circumstances, when, without our struggle, you could not have avoided the chains with which the crafty oppressor of the continent would have loaded you before you could have had notice either of our situation or of his intentions? We wish not to have you slaves; we wish you to be free; we wish you to be equal to ourselves, because you have an equal interest in our liberty: we are not tyrants, who speak to you that you should distrust us; we are brethren, whose misfortunes you cannot regard without staining your own reputation.

The interests of men, as well as those of nations, can never be in opposition; the light which ought to lead us to happiness is sufficiently clear for all. If man always consulted that, he would easily know that his interest consists in seeking his own good without giving to others cause to complain. There would then be no need of governors, nor distinction of nations, all men would compose but one family; but as men consult not this divine guide within them, but suffer themselves to be led by others who have not the same interest in conducting them to happiness, hence the neces-

sity of placing them under the government of laws; hence the distinction of families and nations. — This division being admitted, the knowledge of the interests of men became more difficult, because, in place of laws being established solely to preserve, increase, and distribute a portion of happiness already enjoyed, it is pretended that laws are formed to create new interests and relations, and such as men are not capable of; because, taking the cause for the effect, government have sought, by force, or by fraud, to lead men into a road, remote from their individual happiness, though their interests remain the very same as before. I have attempted to shew that the Americans and the Spaniards are but one people, that their interests are the same, and I trust I have shewn it.



### PART III.

**SHOULD** America, united to Spain, be in future as unhappy as she has been since she was first discovered, it would have been desirable that they should never have been known to each other; and if Spain should not derive greater advantages than she has hitherto derived from the possession of America, it would be desirable that she should lose that possession. The gold, the silver, and the other productions of America, so far from satisfying the increased necessities of the old world, only made it more difficult to satisfy her old ones. All her productions being exclusively possessed by Spain, excited the envy and resentment of other nations, and Spain, without considering that the true riches of a nation are her own productions, or those which arise from a mutual and advantageous exchange, disregarded her own produce, and thought only of that which came from her new dominions.

By an attachment to these principles, which at this moment unfortunately cause the desolation of the world, a system has been established, which, impeding the prosperity of a great empire, has brought to the lowest state of degradation the  
 agriculture,



agriculture, arts, and commerce of Spain, a country, which, by the fertility of its soil, the excellence of its climate, by its local situation and the superiority of its productions over those of other nations, ought by itself to have been the first nation in Europe, and by the possession of America would have become the greatest empire ever known, if the extent of its political and economical knowledge had been equal to the extent of its dominions and productions. In place of extending its relations with other powers, by permitting the exportation of the immense produce of its new territory, it insulated itself more than ever.

Other nations, conducting themselves by the same maxims, and not content with seeing the ruin which these superabundant productions were causing to Spain, became her enemies for the sake of depriving her of as much as they could.— In this mode, so far from the productions of the New World becoming the means of exchange and increase of industry, they became an apple of discord, an inexhaustible source of war. From that period, so far from enriching themselves by labour, the different governments of Europe only sought for means to lay restrictions upon commerce, each thinking it possible, by these means, to possess it exclusively; they pretended to regulate the labour not only of their own people, but of others, and in place of exciting a general spirit of industry, this

this new system only produced continual wars. Like the most barbarous nations, they saw no means of promoting their own prosperity, but by destroying that of others, and in sacrificing a part of their own riches in order to take an equal share from their rivals. There was hardly one nation that did not wish to engross to itself the commerce of the whole; from that period their chief policy consisted, not in augmenting their own real powers, but in diminishing that of their rivals, or at least to enrich themselves by impoverishing all others. Hence it is that there is not one which owes its aggrandizement to the discovery of America, though that ought to have enriched them all; and yet there is hardly one which can boast of having gained more by that celebrated event, than being able to use gold and silver vessels in the room of iron and copper.

When can we hope that the people will open their eyes, and where they expected their greatest happiness, not find their greatest misery! — Nations, say our rulers, and even our most esteemed economists are of the same opinion, are only rich and powerful when they possess a quantity of gold and silver, which are the representatives of all other commodities. Spain, the sole possessor of these metals, would possess them in greater abundance if she would shut her ports against all other nations, or only open them under considerable



considerable restrictions. The rulers of other nations might say, that America, so fruitful in the precious metals, and in other productions useful for commerce, being solely in the possession of Spain, will give her an excessive degree of power, and we shall all be poor: it behoves us therefore to attempt to possess a part of these riches, and even to try to render America independent, in order to enjoy her commerce. Hence has arisen the principal cause of all the wars which have hitherto desolated Europe, and the origin of that restrictive system of commerce which all nations have adopted, and which sooner or later will prove their ruin, although some may, from other causes, have enjoyed a temporary prosperity. To shew the evils which this system has produced in Spain and in America, will form the chief subject of this division of my treatise; and if I should be fortunate enough to do justice to it, I have no doubt of making it evident that the interests of both are not irreconcilable, but positively inseparable.

To attempt to shew that no nation under arbitrary government can advance in improvement, would be to suppose my readers totally uninformed; and it would be superfluous, inasmuch as Spain has now the good fortune to be placed under a government which acknowledges this truth so conformable to justice and interest well understood. Neither do I conceive it requisite to



to shew that Spain and America have hitherto been governed without any other law or rule than the caprice of kings and their ministers, and that the misery of the people has always been in proportion to these men's injustice. I will not attempt to demonstrate by what sort of constitution the two countries ought henceforth to be governed, as the representatives of the nation are already employed on that subject, and they cannot fail to establish it on the foundations of liberty and justice, in conformity to the principles they have already acknowledged. I will speak, however, of the urgent necessity of removing from the Americans every motive of mistrust and complaint, of assuring them of their future lot, and of the political advantages they will be entitled to enjoy. I will speak most fully on the interest of the Spaniards and Americans to remain united, by shewing the principal causes which have obstructed the prosperity of America, and contributed to the ruin of Spain. Lastly, I will briefly attempt to shew how much it is the interest of our allies to conduct themselves during the dis-sension between the two countries, on the principles of justice. I shall no doubt speak of things that are very common, but I shall not be ashamed of that if I explain my ideas with clearness. The great thing requisite is to make one's self understood, and to shew the truth in its true light:

new

new and original ideas are much less frequent than people imagine, neither are they to be expected in a work like the present. If I obtain my object, I shall have performed an important service for my country.

1. All the different governments of Spain, since the revolution, have acknowledged the right of America to a complete equality with the Spaniards in all things, but not one, not even the Cortes, has had sufficient honesty or resolution to perform its promises. To have declared that the Americans formed an integral part of the Spanish monarchy, and to refuse them an equal share in the representation, is a manifest inconsistency. The sovereignty can only originate in the will of the people, without it all government is an usurpation; even the majority cannot deprive the minority of a right so essential. Should twenty provinces unite in depriving the twenty-first of its representation, it would be of no effect; the act would be to all intents and purposes null; much less can any province be deprived of its share in forming a constitution, a work the most important, in which the sovereign power can be employed. It is therefore ridiculous to say that the future constitution can determine the mode or quantum of representation to which America is entitled. The constitution cannot confer rights, it can only declare and preserve them. If the Americans did not possess



possess rights prior to the constitution, it could not grant them, and if she did, the constitution cannot take them away, for one of the greatest rights is that of forming a constitution. To say that the present Cortes is extraordinary, is either to say nothing at all, or to say that it is a body empowered to regulate for the future the functions to be exercised by the different authorities, and the mode of electing those authorities.

If the Americans possessed, at all times, the right of participating in the sovereignty, as a part of the nation, they could not be deprived, without inconsistency, of the right of forming a part of the Extraordinary Cortes. To say that the system of the representation remains to be fixed, is a mistake, and a mistake that would be fatal to the Cortes itself. The system of the representation, which composes at present the sovereignty of the Spanish people, was regulated at its meeting according to a calculation of its population; and in conformity with this calculation the Americans ought to be represented; if the former government, either from injustice or from not sufficiently considering its authority, did not dare to acknowledge the rights of the Americans on account of the doubtful circumstances of the different classes of inhabitants, the Congress ought to settle these doubts by declaring that, from the moment of their first



first meeting, the principle extended equally to all the Americans:

Supposing this system to be changed, and adapted to the proportion of taxes, or any thing else, it must vary for both alike. This variation does not suppose the non-existence of the right, it supposes its existence. What signifies it to say that the system is not fixed? That it is not legal? How then has the Cortés been assembled? On what does its authority rest? On its legality? Why then is it not the same for the Americans, whose equal rights are already recognised, and existed prior to such a recognition? What signifies it to say that they are not established? Is it meant to be insinuated that they can be changed to-morrow, and that therefore it is useless to summon the Americans to the Cortés till their rights are fixed by the constitution? Were this a sufficient motive for delaying to summon the Americans, the same reason might exist to-morrow and for ever, because nothing in nature is stationary; and assuredly the constitution will vary in the course of time according to circumstances, since the foresight of man is limited. To say, that if the Americans are summoned to the Cortés they will change the constitution, either arises from a perfidious motive, or from an idle fear. Should the Spanish nation attempt to make a constitution,

tion, or a law, to the injury of the Americans, no doubt they would be justified in attempting to repeal either the one or the other; and why not? Let me say to the Cortes, "Fathers of your country, your probity and honour are too well known to be doubted for a moment; but your wisdom is not such as to justify you in believing yourselves infallible, or wholly exempt from error.—Your suspicions on this head are unfounded; the Americans will approve your decrees if they are just; and if they do not approve them, you are not authorised to deprive the Americans of the enjoyment of that share in the representation which they have a right to, merely to avoid an imaginary evil, nor can you satisfy them with saying that they already have representatives, if they have not the number determined by the law."

All this is not to say that the work of the constitution ought to be deferred for a moment; its suspension would be a much greater evil to us than even the loss of America. The constitution is that which must enliven our enthusiasm, and give a new tone of energy to the nation, and make the tyrant tremble. Without a constitution, we have neither liberty nor country, let those who are interested in our abuses say what they will. The Spaniards, while they are without it, can have no interest in opposing the enemy, since

since they cannot enjoy those two inestimable blessings without which life has no enjoyment; and this same constitution, if it is as liberal as it ought to be, will tend to bind the Americans more closely to us, and they will approve it, if it is just, if not, they will do all in their power to make another, and it is the interest of all that it should be just and equal.

If we consult the history of all governments, we shall find that the inconsistencies and contradictions which mark their conduct, are as frequent as those of individuals, and have no other origin than ignorance of the principles of truth and justice, which are uniform and consistent; we shall find also that these inconsistencies have the most pernicious effects on the interests of society, for public men are accustomed to believe that virtue, justice, and the duties of nations to each other, are nothing but mere names, and that every thing but the sordid interests of conquest, commerce, and command, is ridiculous and contemptible. The Spaniards of America have suffered, for three hundred years, the oppression of an arbitrary government, without ever separating themselves from the mother country, notwithstanding the example offered them by the colonies of England. Whatever reform they would have attempted, therefore, would only have been dictated by reason and general convenience, which would have contributed, in a great



great measure, to facilitate their undertaking. Events have lately happened which led the Spaniards to seek to regain their liberty, and consequently that of America; the determination seemed so just as to deserve the approbation of both, and is the first time that a sense of the general interests united the sentiments of nations so far separated. It is therefore by no means to be wondered, that before they knew the intentions of the new government of the Peninsula, they had thought of their own independence. Equality of rights was declared for the Americans; and it was to be hoped that the constitution would have been quietly formed, because those who were principally interested in the continuance of abuses, could no longer oppose themselves to the wishes of the nation. Although the Spaniards had consulted only their own convenience, and disregarded the bonds of friendship and justice which united them to America, they were equally interested that America should remain free, and afford them a retreat where they might be happy under a wise and free government, in case the Peninsula should be conquered by the tyrant. The fears of the Spaniards, least these things should happen, and the necessity of seeking aid from the Americans, to carry on the glorious struggle in which they were engaged, afforded other motives for removing all jealousies between the two nations. All these circumstances could

could not fail to inspire the Americans with pleasing hopes, and bind them in closer union to the Spaniards, whose revolution hastened the period of American freedom. Their disunion, besides being unjust, was impolitic, because it removed to a greater distance those bright prospects which now began to appear for America.

Had the Americans, therefore, merely remained tranquil spectators, they would have enjoyed the fruit of all the reform they had so long desired; but seduced either by the agents of the tyrant, or by their want of foresight, they separated themselves from the mother country, to embrace the cause of a party whose first measures gave evident signs of an unfortunate issue. Setting aside the consideration that neither honour nor justice could permit the Americans to separate themselves from Spain, while she was sacrificing herself in defence of the human race, such a determination could never be for the interest of America.

The happiness of a nation can never be in danger but from the invasion of an external enemy, or the misconduct of its own government. To the first all small states are continually exposed. The most rigid virtue, and the wisest laws; are not sufficient to defend them against a powerful enemy, if they can bring no stronger force to their aid. This has constantly happened, and ever will happen. To the shame of human nature, it is too well

well known that the riches of individuals, the force and power of nations have always attracted the consideration and regard of men at all times and in all countries. Hence it is that one man wishes to be rich, and another to extend his power. The law of private safety and convenience, from whose principles no society can depart without neglecting its interest and its duty, is that which inspires it with the idea of preserving and augmenting its greatness. The love and the duty of every man to seek his own convenience, may sometimes inspire a part of society with a desire of separating itself from the rest, and forming a new society, which will be just and useful, provided they cannot find that convenience under their former union, from the effects of a despotic government. It is this motive which justifies the conduct of those people, who, seeing their complaints disregarded, determine to shake off the yoke of despotism and form a new government. They will attempt to meliorate their condition by every possible means, and they will not have overstepped the line of their duty if they can thus increase and secure their happiness; but even this melioration cannot be considered with regard to a foreign enemy, it can only be considered with regard to internal liberty. There can be no doubt that all advantages are on the side of those who remain united to the government, the power and

G

force



force of society will be greater, it will consequently be more secure against the attacks of external enemies; its tranquillity will be better preserved, because it will have fewer external enemies, since a state counts the number of these by the number of other nations. This same power and force will be so much the less costly to the citizens, in proportion as the number of those who contribute to it will be greater, not being contented with having a force in proportion to their own ideas, but to that of the adjoining states. Nations do not merely gratify their vanity in being great, they enjoy a real advantage from being so, provided they do not abuse their power. On this consideration, therefore, it is evident that the Americans will suffer by their separation from Spain; let us now see how we may calculate on their future destiny.

Let us suppose for a moment, which is far from being the case, that all the different states of America were amicably united, and agreed to form one sole government, by which means they will be better enabled to resist an external enemy. Its population at present hardly amounts to fifteen millions, of which number scarcely three are composed of Creoles and Europeans; the rest is formed of Indians and Negroes, a race without virtues, without cultivation, and without education; it will allow that a free and just government will do  
all

all in its power to augment population, and increase information, yet it will be many years before they can be on a level with France in these two branches, in order to resist its attacks. Many years must elapse before they can come in competition with Europe, or dream of avoiding the acts of usurpation she will seek to commit. America is the sole possessor of the richest productions; she is therefore an object much coveted by all civilised nations; these nations will therefore always be her enemies, while she is exposed to her present necessities, and while she possesses her present abundance of the precious metals: that is to say, that America is not in a state to aspire at freedom; if she wishes to become so, she must ally herself to some European power of the first rank; her political existence, her tranquillity, and her interest require it. Her riches will only serve to raise her new enemies, and inspire those bold attacks to which those nations are for ever subject, which possess gold and silver. She may be considered as an infant decked out with jewels, whom it is impossible to leave to itself without the risque of being robbed; she will inevitably be the prey of the first adventurer who attacks her, and she will even offer a temptation to nations of the greatest probability. Spain, from her local situation, will, under a good government, always be a bulwark to defend the New World from every hostile attack; by her

abundance of gunpowder and iron, of which America possesses so little, even laying aside all other considerations, she is the nation of all Europe who ought to be most closely united to that part of the world. It is evident then that all these things being considered, America, so far from gaining any thing, will be a considerable loser by her separation from Spain, because with a government equally just, when united to her, she will be much more strong, more rich, and have far fewer enemies.

If we consider her future happiness, as it depends on her internal liberty and good government, I am of opinion that her separation from the mother country, so far from being advantageous in that respect, will prove the greatest injury. The Spanish government is about to form a constitution, and the American representatives ought to be present at the sovereign Congress. Spain cannot be saved without a free, or, what is the same thing, a just constitution; there is every reason to expect that she will form one, considering the principles she has already adopted. The Americans, by their distance from the enemy, by his utter inability to disturb her, is about to enjoy the fruits of Spanish freedom, and to be free from that oppression and injustice with which she has so long been harassed. Should it, however, happen by any unforeseen misfortune, that a constitution should



should not be formed suitable to the people of America, they will then be at full liberty to separate themselves from Spain. They could not possibly omit such an opportunity, for they never could have any ground for believing that the Spanish government could intend to give them up to Bonaparte, though they alleged it as a motive for their first insurrection; and it is so evidently malicious, that no man, who is attempting to pacify the two nations by shewing them their mutual interests, can possibly speak of it with suitable moderation. For the Americans to attempt to separate from Spain before the epoch of the new constitution, shewed that they did not understand their own interest. Supposing the Cortes to fulfil their duty, the wishes of the Americans would be satisfied without the necessity of bloodshed, and without meanly abandoning the mother country in the most glorious struggle which a nation ever engaged in. Supposing the Cortes did not fulfil their duty, and either left the Americans in their former wretched state, or failed to make them as happy as they had a right to expect, then was the time for them to rise. Not to wait for that epoch was to defer the period of their liberty, since, as experience has mournfully proved, it was impossible they could separate themselves from the Spaniards without suffering all the miseries of a civil war, a war to be  
dreaded

dreaded in proportion to the inveterate hatred which the different races of its inhabitants bore to each other; and this heterogeneous mixture, which is greater than in any other nation of the globe, has contributed in a great measure to obscure their rights, and confuse their transactions with each other.

If the difference of ranks, even in countries the most civilised, impedes the course of revolutions, it is most probable that in Spanish America, where there is so great an opposition of interests, customs, and ranks, and a thin population dispersed over an immense extent of territory, the degree of union requisite to form a regular government will be almost impossible. The implacable hatred arising from a system in which all are either oppressors or oppressed, the ambition and other bad passions of the reformers; the grievances which many innocent families must suffer, will be so many torches of discord, to feed for many years the flames of civil war, which can only terminate in the desolation of a country not above half peopled, and so ignorant as to impress the character of ferocity on their revolution. Even those who ought to possess most information, will distinguish themselves by legal assassination, and by not listening to those who have no other fault than that of not obeying their authority, as if every man was not at liberty to recognise, or not,  
a govern-

a government newly established, and to become a member or not of the social compact. Such men know not that no man can be *compelled* to embrace a contract, be it what it may, and that even if a single individual takes up arms against a government which he has never acknowledged, he may commit an act of hostility, but not a crime, and that nothing can authorise that government to punish him capitally, whom only ignorant or sanguinary men can consider otherwise than as a prisoner of war.

All these considerations, and many others to which the conduct of Napoleon has given rise, and the resentment that for many years the Spaniards will retain, give us reason to believe that the civil wars of the Spanish Americans will be long and bloody. The Anglo-Americans, notwithstanding they had both France and Spain on their side, notwithstanding their whole population consisted but of one race, and notwithstanding they were united among each other, suffered for nine years the miseries of civil war before they established their liberty. The Spanish Americans will require a long time before their government is settled, unless they unite themselves to the mother country by a constitution, which, to be just, must be equally beneficial to both parties, for sound philosophy declares that injustice can never profit either an individual or a nation.—

Every



Every impartial man must confess that the Americans, by their first imprudent step, have exposed themselves to incalculable evils, and that all they have done can only retard the period of their liberty. Whoever examines the subject with all the coolness it deserves, will confess that the probability of their obtaining that liberty, united or separated, being equal, they both run a risk of losing it by means of their separation. The Spaniards will thus be deprived of the means of obtaining theirs, the Americans will be in danger of a civil war, and of all those profuse expenses required to establish a new government; they will be compelled to raise immense armies disproportioned to their population, which will be the ruin of their agriculture and industry. The interest of both, then, is the same; to establish a constitution which may secure the liberty of both; and an equal enjoyment of their property; to establish a system of administration the most free and least expensive possible, and to remove the causes which have hitherto principally obstructed the progress of their national prosperity; this is the interest of both, and that their interests can never come in competition with each other will be evident after an attentive examination.

My chief object being a reconciliation between the Spaniards and the Americans, and since the best method to produce that is to shew that their  
 their

their interests are the same, I will speak only of those causes which have most contributed to divide them, by having admitted a system of administration which put them in opposition to each other, and consequently produced the ruin of both. I will not stop to examine the evils which were caused by an arbitrary government, and by our former vicious institutions, because these are too notorious to all the world. I will speak only of our restrictive system, which, in order to preserve America under our yoke, judged it expedient to monopolise its agriculture, commerce, and industry, for which reason the discovery and possession of these fertile dominions, so far from enriching, served only to impoverish and weaken the Peninsula, without increasing the happiness of America.

My ideas may possibly be sometimes mistaken, but the subject is too interesting and too copious not to deserve the most serious consideration from the fathers of their country, when they are engaged in attempting to remove the evils by which it has been so long afflicted. Whole nations, either through jealousy or ignorance, have at various times adopted measures directly contrary to those which they ought to pursue for the attainment of their ends. The Spanish government, in order to retain America in their power, believed that they ought not to permit her to establish

blish any art or manufacture known in Europe, nor improve in her territory any production of the Peninsula. This was no doubt a very impolitic system; the reciprocal and general interest of individuals and of nations is the only thing that can inspire them with a love of the state, or induce them to use their best efforts to maintain the prosperity they enjoy. The contrary is a state of violence which can never subsist after an opportunity offers of being freed from it, and as to economy, it was a system equally opposed to the public interest. A government never can be rich while the people are poor, nor the people be rich while the government is poor. The greater the industry, agriculture, and commerce of the Americans, the more rich and happy they will be, and consequently the more powerful will be the Spanish government; the more contented and happy the Spaniards are, the more firm will be the union of the two nations. It would be useless for me to attempt to illustrate truths so evident to men of sense and honour, and to such only I address myself.

The Spanish government, in departing from these simple principles, and expecting to enjoy the sole advantages arising from the commerce of a country possessed of the most rare and precious productions, so far restrained it, as not only to exclude strangers, but even not to allow it to  
Spaniards,



Spaniards, except under such restrictions as occasioned the ruin of both countries. It cannot be doubted that the concurrence of a multitude of different causes, which do not properly belong to my subject, contributed to the decline of the Spanish nation, and yet they did not all together produce so much evil as the system of commerce adopted towards America. I will agree without hesitation to the causes assigned by our best writers for the decline of our prosperity, but I will only consider them as secondary, and not principal. Among these were the expulsion of a million of Jews during the time of the catholic kings; the expulsion of two millions of Moors in the time of Philip III.; the foreign and internal wars, from the time of Charles I. till the year 1715, which caused continual armies and treasures to be sent, for their maintenance, to Italy, Holland, Flanders, and Portugal; the emigration of the Spaniard for two hundred years to Italy and Flanders; the continual depredations of the pirates from the coast of Barbary for near three hundred years, who, according to the calculation of Campontanés, took annually not less than thirty thousand Spanish prisoners; the new institutions, which, attacking the personal security of individuals, drove from the bosom of Spain a great portion of her nation, and inspired these strangers with terror, by whom the natural advantages of a country,

country, so superior to all others, ought rather to have invited to settle in her territory; the immense increase of convents since the times of the catholic kings; the multitude of religious festivals; the establishment of entails which Charles the First introduced from Germany; the privileges of the Mesta; the monopolies of the government; the privileged companies; and, above all, the ruinous taxes upon industry. I will not attempt to shew the evils which all these different causes have inevitably produced; they cannot be the subject of a dissertation any more perhaps than those I am about to examine. I will now speak of the economical system adopted towards America; a system, which, opposed to each other, the interests of the Americans and Spaniards, in my conception, contributed more than all the other causes united to the decline of Spain.

The three causes from which it was believed that the prosperity of Spain arose, are those which, in my opinion, chiefly occasioned the ruin of its agriculture, industry, and arts. First, the great revenue produced by the commerce of the New World. Secondly, the strong restrictions of that commerce, not only by the exclusion of Spaniards, but of strangers. Thirdly, the great quantity of silver imported into Spain. It would require many volumes to treat of a subject so extensive and so opposite to the generally received

ceived ideas; but I will say enough to convince those who examine the subject in earnest, that these causes must produce the most terrible evils, and that nothing but a liberty of commerce, limited by a prudent regulation of customs, with the permission for strangers to trade directly for all the ports of America, can exalt the nation to that height of prosperity and power at which it is capable of arriving.

Let us now see what effect the great returns of the commerce of America had on the decline of the commerce, agriculture, and industry of Spain. It is undeniable that the commerce of America produced very great returns. It is sufficient to know that if very few persons were concerned in it, and that it was a privileged monopoly granted only to those whom the court chose, in order to know that their gains were immense. Spaniards, who are interested on the subject, pretend to make the contrary believed, in order to preserve their monopoly; but it is easy to demonstrate the falsity of their assertions. The value of things always increases in proportion to their scarcity, and diminishes in a contrary proportion. The less the number of sellers, the more they will give the law to the buyers, the greater will be their gains, and the surer their sale. The number of Spanish traders being very small, the profits of their commerce was proportionably great. Thus the merchants.



chants of Seville, while that was the only port licensed to carry on American commerce, and afterwards those of Cadiz, and all the ports licensed by Charles the Third, were more enriched than all the other merchants of Spain. This excess inevitably injured all the other branches of national prosperity, and produced those effects which every monopoly must produce, that is to reduce the benefits of commerce to a small number of persons, and to make it impossible for others to attempt any competition with them, or to enjoy any share of prosperity.

Commerce is so nearly allied to agriculture and industry, that it is not possible that the balance should incline either to the one or the other, without disturbing that equilibrium on which the general prosperity depends. In order to preserve this level, it is requisite that all should enjoy an equal degree of liberty. It being well known that the Spaniards derived great benefit from the commerce of America, the consequence which followed was natural; men always desire to lay out their capital, where it will produce the greatest return; few Spaniards therefore chose to employ it in agriculture or in manufactures, the profits of which were not only much less, but infinitely more tardy. The excessive interest which, notwithstanding the law, individuals received by lending their money to be employed in American

American commerce was far beyond that which it could produce in being employed in Spain: how could it be supposed therefore, that any Spanish capitalist would think of employing his money in the promotion of agriculture, or the construction of manufactories, when they did not return a fifth part of the profit which arose from the commerce of the New World? The decline therefore of every other branch of commerce was the consequence of this inequality, and of the restrictions which caused it. It injured the agriculture and industry of Spain in another way. Immense inequality of property in all societies must inevitably produce innumerable evils; but its effects are the more terrible in proportion as it is more suddenly introduced, for the greater the facility of acquiring riches, the more easily they are dissipated, and disturb the relative value of things, depriving many citizens of the means of acquiring even a small portion of those things requisite for their subsistence, which destroys that level and equality arising from liberty, which, when disturbed by degrees, is less severely felt by the lower and middle ranks of society. The greater and more sudden these pernicious inequalities, the greater is the number of hands withdrawn from the useful labours of agriculture, arts, and commerce, on which the true prosperity of a nation depends. It is not precisely in the  
riches

riches acquired by the commerce of America, nor in the sum of capital which it swallowed up, in which I perceive the origin of the evil; it is solely in the excess of profit which that commerce produced with respect to the other branches of national prosperity. To employ their capital in that branch of commerce which gave the greatest returns, was a sufficient motive for them to neglect those which produced less. Although the commerce of America was not at first so extensive as to engross the chief capital of the nation, nevertheless the hopes that stimulated men to employ it in that was a sufficient motive to withdraw it from other branches; hence the gradual decline of agriculture, arts, and national industry.

The ill effects of this inequality, occasioned by American commerce, would have been avoided by granting it equally to all Spaniards. While there exists in a nation one branch of prosperity which offers to its people greater advantages than another, the natural effect will be the ruin of those which offer the least, since men always follow that which affords them the greatest prospect of advantage. These three causes to which I attribute the decline of Spain are so essentially united, that whoever attempts to demonstrate the one will demonstrate the other: to avoid repetition, I will now go on to the second, that is to say, the restrictions on American commerce, which



which amount to exclusion, not only of strangers, but of almost every Spaniard.

In order to explain myself with greater accuracy, it is requisite first to define what is meant by commerce and by riches, whence they arise, what advantages they produce, and how they contribute to augment the prosperity of a nation. Commerce is the exchange of one commodity for another, and supposes always two things, a superabundance on the one side, for no one sells what he is in want of, and a consumption on the other, for no one buys what he does not want to consume, or at least no one sells what he wants of one thing if he has not a greater want of another. To facilitate this exchange among the producers of different countries, since they cannot make it themselves, the agency of intermediate persons is requisite, and the use of these men in society is too evident to be enlarged on, and the greater the liberty allowed to these persons in the exchange of commodities, the greater will be the quantity of goods produced and exchanged; the advantages of this liberty therefore to individuals must be evident; let us see if they are equally so to whole nations.

The riches of individuals are the riches of the state, for both consist in the abundance of those things which are required for the various uses and pleasures of life. All are the productions of the

H

earth,

earth, for she is the common mother of all, and yet the most fruitful lands do not produce an abundance proportioned to the necessities of man in society, nor of a quality equal to his desires; considerable labour is requisite for both these improvements, and to that alone we are indebted for abundance. Nevertheless, this could not be acquired and distributed so as to supply the wants of some, and take off the redundancy of others without the means of commerce; without this, he, who could not dispose of the superfluity of one year, would raise no more the next than was requisite to supply his own wants, and thus both commerce and production would be at a stand. It is commerce, then, which gives a value to all the productions of the earth, by exchanging that which is useless to one man, for that which another is in want of; thus though the merchant does not cultivate the earth, he causes it to be cultivated, he stimulates the labourer to make the earth produce her utmost, knowing that he can dispose of what he cannot consume, and thus he advances it to greater improvement; this improvement, which will exist while the labourer is in no need of a sufficient portion of land on which to employ his industry, will always be the consequence of the security of property, and the liberty and convenience which attends its transfer. The rude materials, which form the mass of all riches, acquire an additional

ditional value by means of the arts which give them new forms, and apply them to an infinity of uses, and the labourer and the artisan, when free from restraints, will mutually increase the productions of each other, but without this both will languish and cease to find employment. With every new discovery of art, and every advance which it makes, the labourer will acquire new riches, since he will find the value of his produce either created or increased, and this improvement gives new life to commerce and to consumption; thus we find the prosperity or decline of agriculture, commerce, and industry are intimately united, and are the true sources of national prosperity.

From all that has been said, it may be deduced that the nation which employs the greatest number of hands in the greatest variety of labours will be the richest, and on the contrary, whenever, by a system of religion, economy, or policy, the greatest number of citizens, in proportion to the population, is withheld from employment, that nation will be the poorest; it follows also that every country will produce in proportion to its consumption, that it will do both in proportion to its commerce, and that it will do all in proportion to its liberty, and in the same proportion it will increase its population; from hence it follows also that all nations, which are em-



ployed solely in producing and not in consuming, mistake their own interest; that by adopting so ridiculous a system, they have given rise to perpetual wars, and mutually ruined each other by attempting to convert all their labours into gold, since the discovery of that country, which has produced it in such abundance as to lessen its worth; that, on the other hand, their policy and their ambition are in manifest contradiction to their system of economy, since each wishes to be maintained in idleness by the other for a small salary in money, as a master pays his servants. In opposition to all this, they extravagantly praise the system of those who maintain that the earth is not able to maintain all those who are born, that is to say, that man can produce in a greater proportion than his produce can be supported by the fruits of the earth. Such contradictions and follies we see, hear, and tolerate, because man is a creature almost wholly guided by custom, by passion, or by prepossession. It is sufficient for him that an abuse is long established to pronounce it a wise and infallible rule of action.

To return to my subject; it is evident that the Spanish government, since the first discovery of America, adopted a system of political economy the most opposite to the plain and simple principles here laid down, a system which could not fail to produce her decline. Since it is agreed that



that commerce increases the value of all human productions, and stimulates man to labour, the less liberty a government gives to its subjects, the less will be the value of their productions, and the less their quantity. As the foreigner is of equal use to the countries he trades with as the native, it was therefore a ruinous policy for both the Spanish and the American government to exclude strangers from the commerce of the country. The more we examine the theory of political economy, and the more we attend to the experience of all nations, the more we must be convinced that the nation, in which individuals enjoy the greatest liberty for labour and commerce, has been the richest and the best peopled. Commerce is a species of flux and reflux, which carries to nations the superfluities of each other. It is indispensable that each should consume a value equivalent to their labour, either in metal, or in goods, or in manufactures.

When we examine the third cause, which I believe to have contributed to the decline of Spain, we shall see that it is no advantage to a nation to reduce all things to a mere traffic of gold or silver, and that the abundance of these metals is highly injurious. The more free and populous a nation, the more it will consume of the productions of other nations. To be convinced of this truth, and of the great advantages which result from this freedom of labour

labour and commerce, it will be sufficient to know that England, since the independence of her American colonies, carries on with them a commerce which produces to the public revenue and to the pockets of individuals more than double what they produced under her dominion, an effect which arises solely from the liberty of the English Americans, by which they have gained an increase of population, and are thus in a situation to consume more of English productions. It is therefore now time that the Spanish government should perceive the errors of its economical system towards America, and seek to repair them; and this it can only do by granting an equal protection to all ranks and degrees of Spanish citizens. It is impossible that this protection can be called equal, when agriculture is protected more than manufactures, and manufactures more than commerce. The prosperity of these three branches is so inseparably united, that one cannot be affected without the other. The sovereign protection, which ought at all times to watch over the labours of a society, consists chiefly in making it respected abroad, and preserving internal order, that is, in preserving to every individual the free choice of his labour. In this respect all that government has to do, is to be quiet; it is folly and injustice to pretend to interfere with individuals



viduals in the choice and disposal of their labour; for whenever they meddle, it is only to shew a preference to some above others, and this preference cannot be granted without attacking the rights of the rest of society. Preference supposes exclusion, and unmerited exclusion is injustice.

The Spanish nation should now commence, as it were, a new existence. The innumerable evils we have suffered, are the strongest proof that we have not been governed as we ought. We have many excellent laws which the government have only to see observed in future, but they are not those which relate to our system of political economy, for these have produced the decline of our prosperity, and to seek from these any support in future would be to consecrate the cause of our evils. Are we certain that our ancient legislators have not been mistaken in not daring to oppose them, or to examine their utility; if we are not, why do not our present legislators enquire if these laws ordain what is right, or what ought to be ordained? Would not the decline of our prosperity have been a sufficient motive for such an enquiry? Possibly I may be mistaken in many particulars, but I am confident that no man of probity and sense will venture to contravert the principle which is the basis of all my ideas on political economy, viz. That the only mode of enriching a nation is to employ the  
greatest

greatest number of hands in agriculture, industry, and commerce, which are the three great sources of national prosperity, and for this end, it is requisite to grant complete liberty to every individual to employ himself as he pleases, and to dispose of the fruits of his labour without any restraint. If the Spanish government is convinced of this truth, it will find that no occasion can ever arise to put at variance the interests of America and Spain.

The Spanish nation, which has made greater sacrifices to civil liberty than any other, ought for that reason to be the first to assure the liberty of commerce, for want of which nations so much hate each other, and humanity so cruelly suffers. To Spain, more than to any other nation, on account of her depopulation of the immense extent of her coasts, and of her various indigenous productions, it belongs to give a beginning to this great and laudable undertaking. I will not attempt to say that this is exactly the moment when Spain ought to put an end to the barbarous and oppressive establishment of customs. This may appear a paradox, and it will either be said, that this system is not so injurious as it has been supposed, or that I am not a true friend of my country; nevertheless, after having briefly explained how much it becomes all nations, and particularly Spain, to attempt to abolish an establishment

blishment so contrary to the object they ought always to aim at, accommodating myself to a prepossession, which it is impossible at once to root out, I will say that Spain ought to equalise her customs with those of America, and to give to both the most complete liberty, that is, to remove every monopoly and privilege, personal as well as local, and to take care that there shall be no unequal duty upon any manufacture or produce of any nation, so as to give no temptation to that species of commerce called contraband, and, finally, that all foreigners may be allowed to trade in all parts of both countries. In this mode I am persuaded the interests of Spain, America, and other nations will be best consulted.

The present government of Spain, conducted on the principles of wisdom and justice, and getting rid of those prepossessions which few governments ever get rid of, has already declared that the Americans shall enjoy a complete liberty to cultivate and manufacture every kind of produce of which their soil is capable. Nothing therefore is left them to wish for, in order to become rich, but the freedom of commerce. The contrary to this wise determination, besides being an intolerable oppression, will keep them in constant poverty, and the taxes with which they may furnish the state will not be equal to what they might be in future.

Their



Their riches and their new establishments, so far from injuring, will rather promote those of the Peninsula, because their population will increase in proportion to their manufactures, and their consumption will always be in proportion to their population and their riches. Finally, there can be no good reason given why the same thing should not happen which happened to England in regard to its North American colonies, which, though their agriculture, manufactures, and commerce have considerably increased, consume at present much more English produce than when those branches were hardly known, because their population and factitious wants have increased in proportion to their riches. The present Cortes has therefore acted with the greatest wisdom, it has shewn that it understands the interests both of Spain and America, it is worthy of the greatest praise, and though many writers, actuated by the spirit of party, have ridiculed its conduct, and insulted it with the epithets of ignorant, superstitious, and despotic, it deserves for this single act more glory and renown than any other government in the world, and has done more for the liberty and happiness of other nations, than even those very nations which pride themselves on their freedom.

To prove the good effects of this measure; which I have just alluded to, I will not have recourse

course to deep reasonings or metaphysical calculations, I will apply only to facts that are proved by experience, and which it is impossible to deny without a determination to resist conviction.

It is sufficient to know that the fullest liberty granted to industry, commerce, and manufactures can injure no one, in order to know that it ought to be allowed by every just government; how terrible is the power of prepossession which will not allow us to establish a system which injures no one, and does good to all! Let us, however, consult the data which the history of our commerce, agriculture, manufactures, and population affords us: let us compare their different epochs, and we must be convinced that their decline or prosperity has always been in proportion to the freedom they have enjoyed.

Spain was formerly more celebrated for the industry of her inhabitants, for the progress of her agriculture, and the extent of her commerce, than even for the fertility of her soil. The invasion of the northern barbarians caused the decline of that industry for which the Spaniards were famed in the times of the Romans and Carthaginians, because these nations despised all arts but that of war. The Arabians, a nation the most civilised of their time, next governed Spain, and raised her to a degree of prosperity unknown to any other

other European nation ; and there are yet proofs remaining that they advanced the arts, particularly that of agriculture, to a pitch which would do honour to the nations which are at present most famed for it. In the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, the commerce of the Peninsula, and particularly in the province of Arragon, was immense. Barcelona, Almeria, and Valencia were considered as the most commercial cities in Europe. Barcelona maintained several armed vessels to defend her coast, and the expeditions which she fitted out to Tunis where she had established a factory. The merchant vessels, according to our best writers, formed a considerable marine, and were all built in the arsenals of the Peninsula with timber from its forests. The kings of Spain had to that period, notwithstanding their continual wars, supported themselves without any other revenue than the property of the crown, and some casual donations from the Cortes, and without any other tax than the *Alcavala*, first granted for a short time by the Cortes of Burgos to Alphonso the Second at the end of the 8th century, and rendered perpetual to Henry the Third in the fourteenth ; and the *Cientos*, granted first by a certain number of towns to the same Alphonso, and rendered perpetual to his successors. The Spaniards had nothing to do with customs, though they paid the *Cientos*, which



which in the beginning were a five per centage, and afterwards ten per cent upon all merchandize ; they had no other mode of collection than the good faith of individuals, in which they trusted for its payment, they knew no species of forbidden goods, and they exacted no tax from foreigners. From the end of the fourteenth to the middle of the fifteenth century, when they extended their conquests over the Goths, and drove their ancient conquerors from Spain, their decline began first to commence ; from that period history presents us three very different epochs of prosperity and decline, whose causes cannot be such as are generally believed, because these existed before the end of the catholic kings, and Spain, from the middle of the fifteenth to the middle of the sixteenth century, enjoyed a period of most brilliant prosperity ; her silk and woollen manufactories were numerous and extensive. It is said that Seville alone reckoned sixteen thousand silk looms, and employed more than one hundred and thirty thousand manufacturers, and that the looms of that kind throughout the rest of the kingdom amounted to an hundred and thirty thousand, which employed one million one hundred thousand individuals ; the woollen manufactories were almost equally numerous ; the cloths of Segovia were in high estimation throughout all Europe ; those of Cuença and Catalonia were

were exported to Italy, Barbary, and the Levant. The tanneries of Spain were at that time very numerous, and those of Cordova were considered the best in Europe, and till the middle of the sixteenth century she manufactured goods which caused her to be considered as one of the most industrious and commercial nations. It was then, however, that population and commerce might have begun to give way, for there were many powerful reasons for it:—The expulsion of a million of Jews, the principal traders of the nation, by an edict of the catholic kings, dated 30th March, 1492; but that loss was soon repaired, for commerce had not then felt the severe oppression she suffered afterwards. Although the *Alcavala* and the *Cientos* were, perhaps, after the *Millanes*, taxes of all others the most injurious to Spain, yet, as there was no other than these to the time of Ferdinand and Isabella, for more than half a century, the expulsion of the Jews was hardly felt, and on the decease of the last of the catholic kings, its population amounted to above twenty millions, according to some authors, and to others not less than fourteen millions. These facts, attested by history, belie the assertions of those who consider, as the principal causes of our decline, those which are only accessory, or the effects of other causes. If we go on consulting history, we shall find that the barbarous and oppressive

pressive system of customs, unknown before the above period throughout all Europe, was the circumstance which contributed most to the decline of Spain.

The second period, which commenced about the middle of the sixteenth century, presents us with two centuries of misery and degradation. In that short space of time, Spain passed from the highest prosperity to the most abject state of wretchedness that any nation ever suffered; her manufactures wholly vanished; agriculture, which, notwithstanding the continual wars for six centuries before, had provided subsistence not only for her own natives, but for a great part of Italy, had so far declined, that the nation was compelled to derive the third part of its subsistence from abroad, to avoid the miseries of famine. Charles the Fifth, the first monarch who regularly organised despotism, was the author of the barbarous establishment of customs in 1529, and with it the ruin of the nation. He commanded that the commerce of America should be carried on through no other port but Seville, under the pitiful idea that he should not be deprived of his rights, because he had no custom-houses in any other; he imposed the loss of life and forfeiture of the cargo as the penalty for transgressing this ordinance, so cruel and despotic was his government, by this regulation, also,  
he



he imposed a tax of twenty per cent. on all goods exported to America; and in addition to these restrictions, he excluded wholly from this commerce both the natives and foreigners belonging to Arragon, most probably because they were not subject to the *Alcavala* and the *Cientos*, which were paid by the people of Castille, and them he permitted not to send out convoys when it suited them, but only once a year, and their cargoes were only to amount to 26,500 tons in the whole. At that terrible epoch monopolies commenced, when certain kinds of foreign manufactures were forbidden, because they were considered injurious to our national industry, when the exportation of certain raw materials was forbidden, because they were supposed to afford supplies to foreign industry, when the importation of foreign materials was forbidden under pain of capital punishment, because they were supposed to promote foreign agriculture. It was then that, under the idea of doubling the receipts of the revenue, taxes were imposed on all foreign merchandise; it was then that, by means of heavy impositions on every article of consumption, subsistence became more difficult, and labour began to diminish; it was then that commerce, being converted into a privilege, obtained by intrigue or sold for money, and being limited to certain individuals, first began to decline, and agriculture and industry shared

shared the same hard fate; it was then that the grand scheme of custom-houses was carried to its utmost height; a scheme, in which economists without knowledge, and governments without foresight, fancied they beheld the happiness of nations; a scheme which deceived the rulers of states, because by the disposal of an immense sum of money, and the acquisition of immense influence, which the people did not perceive, they hoped to convert, into a sort of philosopher's stone, the labour of the ploughman and the ingenuity of the artisan.

If the prosperity of Spain depended on the possession of rich and extensive territories, on the exclusive enjoyment of abundant mines of gold and silver, and in laying such restrictions on its commerce as that no one should import or export from its dominions any thing but what the government pleased, there would have been nothing more to desire, for it had already become the sole disposer of all individual labour and industry.— Thus the government believed, but unhappily for us, as its views were realised; and in order to monopolise the productions of the New World, as it laid greater restraints upon the commerce both of that, and the Peninsula, so in proportion was our decline. The greater the exactions that were imposed on us, and the greater the quantity of gold and silver brought into the Peninsula, so

I

much

much the greater was our misery, depopulation, and even want of money, because nothing could supply the deficiency occasioned by the loss of a free commerce. All the other evils arising from the ignorance or despotism of a government may be repaired, but nothing can repair the loss of liberty, which must inevitably occasion the decay of industry and depopulation. From this period impositions were daily augmented, and with them a necessity for more, thus becoming the cause and effect of national ruin. At the end of the sixteenth century, Philip the Second, who had contracted an enormous debt on account of his wars, which arose from his fanaticism, pride, and despotism, found himself compelled to impose new taxes on the nation, and of these taxes the most important was the *Millones*. This contribution, so called, because it was a grant of eight millions of ducats, an enormous sum, which had been destined to supply the expenses of the *Invincible Armada*, with which Philip had aimed at subduing England, and calming his irritated pride. Soon after this sum was augmented to twenty-four millions of ducats by a tax upon salt, wine, vinegar, oil, and flesh meat. Although this contribution was not rendered perpetual by the Cortes, it was so by the despotism of those kings, (masters of the army from the time of Charles the First), who, under the guidance of his prime minister,



minister, Cardinal Cisneros, was the first monarch that maintained a standing army to enslave his people, and deprive them of hands that might have been otherwise useful. As it was not perceived that the cause of the evil arose from the restraints upon commerce, the people every day sought for fresh remedies, which only served to hasten the decline of the nation. The public debts continually increasing, and the treasury becoming gradually exhausted, the tax of the *Millones* was extended to articles of the first consumption, under the name of *Provincial Rents*, which ought rather to have been called the destruction of provincial rents.— In a short time, however, nothing being sufficient to satisfy the expenses which the system of Charles the First introduced throughout Europe, monopolies of various kinds were introduced to the ruin and misery of the people in every nation. It was thought to be sufficient if the monarch was rich, they never cared about the people. The provincial rents, and the monopolies which arose from the stagnation of commerce, were the first consequence of the national decline. Attacking directly both population and industry, and oppressing both poor and rich, they contributed to accelerate the evils which already existed, and for which no remedy could be found. In place of the great riches and advantages they expected

expected to derive from the restrictions that were laid on the commerce of the New World, the result was the destruction of a nation, which, in the midst of continual wars, possessed the means of repairing its evils, because it had not hitherto been touched in its vitals. From an eagerness to possess the greatest possible advantage from its recent conquests, the government adopted measures which paralysed every branch of industry and commerce, and reduced the Spanish merchants to a mere precarious trade of commission, which, in Peru, had so far declined, that, in the year 1739, they could not make out two thousand tons of the fifteen thousand they were allowed. In short, nothing can more fully demonstrate our decline from this destructive system, than a knowledge of the state of population. It must be confessed, that during this period, another cause (which, though of some consideration, was only partial) assisted in its diminution, and that was the expulsion of the Moors by Philip the Second in 1604, whose number amounted to about four millions. There is no doubt that this imprudent measure was very injurious to the state, but it would have been much less so, or would soon have been got over, if it had not been aided by the restraints on labour and commerce. Without taking into account these two millions, the rest of the population

lation was diminished by more than one-half, because, according to a census taken in 1715, it did not exceed six millions, and in 1688 it was more than twelve millions; the chief cause of this extraordinary diminution, in so short a period, could be nothing but the ruinous system of custom-houses, as will be more clearly seen by an examination of the following period.— If we consider that of these six millions, 176,057 were clergy and monks, 722,794 nobles, 276,090 dependents of nobles, 50,000 employed in the collection of the revenue in the Peninsula, 19,000 in other employments, and two millions of beggars, according to the most exact computation, we shall find that such a nation contained in its system of administration the principal germ of its ruin, and that the extreme disproportion between the different classes arose from the very same cause. The third period, which began in the reign of Ferdinand the Sixth, presents a more interesting picture of national industry, and evidently shews that nothing but liberty can give spirit to the arts, to commerce, to industry, agriculture, and population. Philip the Fifth, governed solely by Orry, his minister of Finance, whom he believed possessed of great talents, solely because he increased the revenue, left when he died, his treasury empty. This monarch seriously attempted to improve these different branches



branches of national prosperity, but his means were not calculated to forward his intentions. He forbid the introduction of those foreign manufactures which could be manufactured at home; he loaded with duties those of which there were no manufactories in Spain; he commanded that the dress of the army and navy should be of national manufacture, but as this measure could not of itself supply the want of these manufactures, it had no other effect than to lay a further restraint on commerce, to increase the number of poor, and the quantity of contraband goods. It was the effect, and not the cause of the evil which he attempted to remove, and therefore no wonder he was unsuccessful. He forbid, also, the exportation of Spanish produce to nations with whom he was at war, and therefore the English, who had hitherto consumed an immense quantity of our wines, began to establish factories in Portugal, from which circumstance that important branch of cultivation and commerce began with us to decline.

Ferdinand the Sixth, guided by his minister, the Marquis of Ensenada, who, it is impossible to deny, possessed both probity and talents, though he committed many errors, adopted many measures which gave vigour to industry and internal commerce. He opened new roads, he began the canal of Campos, and established manufactures

manufactures of different kinds at the expense of government, which, though they never made any great progress, because they cannot be conducted with so much order and economy as by individuals, gave a spur to agriculture, to industry, and population. But the best thing he did was to assist the manufactories of individuals, by lending them money without interest for a certain number of years, and diminishing the duties. By these and similar measures the state of the kingdom was considerably improved, and population in a few years was increased by three millions. The same thing did not happen to external commerce, because it did not enjoy an equal degree of liberty, particularly in the article of raw silk. Spain was then the sole cultivator of that branch of agriculture, and yet the manufactories of it were considerably diminished, it did not manufacture a fifth part of what was consumed even in the Peninsula and in America. England, France, and Italy bought it from us raw, and sold it in the web. Without considering any thing farther, it was said, Spain is the only cultivator of silk, why cannot she manufacture it and sell it to her colonies, or even to the other powers of Europe, and thus reap an advantage which she may have solely to herself. Events shew us the futility of this mode of reasoning, which even men of information and friends of liberty

liberty have applied to our wool, the value of which, when imported in its manufactured state, according to Campomanes, is worth to foreigners two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, a sum sufficient to shew how much the nation is injured.

There were neither looms sufficient in Spain to manufacture the silk produced, nor could it all be sold to other nations, the cultivation of it was therefore abandoned, because it was of no use to employ the labour and capital of the country in a produce which could neither be consumed nor sold. To this period, at least, Spain possessed this precious branch of agriculture, but by wishing both to cultivate and manufacture it, to the exclusion of all other nations, she lost both her agriculture and manufactures. Fortunately, she adopted other measures with regard to wool, perhaps because she did not aim at the exclusive manufacture of that material, or at least she continued to cultivate it for exportation, or it would infallibly have shared the same fate as that of silk, which was not allowed to be exported, and could not be manufactured in Spain.

Let us now pursue the examination of this measure, in order more fully to demonstrate the necessity of all nations adopting a liberal system of commerce. Spain so far at last abandoned the cultivation of silk, that she was compelled to buy the little she wanted for her own manufactures.

France

France and Italy attempted to cultivate a produce, to which their soil was not adapted, and which they were obliged to pay foreigners to manufacture. Italy, however, found an advantage both in manufacturing and exporting it raw.— England, whose soil and climate did not suit the cultivation, finding it no longer possible to get it from Spain, imported it from Italy and China, but rigorously forbid it in a manufactured state from any country whatever. Spain, therefore, by measures of mistaken policy, lost all those advantages she once enjoyed, and which all nations will lose when they are illiberal enough to believe that their own power depends on the weakness of others. Miserable condition of men and of nations! It is not sufficient for them to be rich; but they must make others poor, because, in their idea, riches consist not in enjoying a sufficiency, but in possessing more than others; their pride is not satisfied if they are not called and believed to be rich, which is impossible when all have sufficient.

Had Spain even arrived at being the only nation in Europe that produced, manufactured, and traded in silk, she would not have derived all the benefit from it which this inaccurate calculation might promise. The increase of a nation's riches will always be in proportion to the number of hands employed in labour, to their ingenuity, and to the fertility of the soil, but not in proportion to the  
the



the manufactures she possesses compared to others or exclusively her own. Spain, at the period I have spoken of, had not a sufficient population to devote herself to agriculture, and to cultivate her soil to the utmost. To take hands from that for the manufacture of silk was not augmenting her riches; it was only varying the means of acquiring them. There was no want of employment in Spain for its inhabitants; it was therefore useless for the government to seek for it, and injurious to restrain or limit its direction; all that government had to do was to find out the cause why those who were able to work could find none. The prohibition to export raw silk did not augment the sum of labour, and therefore it could not augment their riches. When labour is free, that of all classes will find its level; the ploughman and the artisan will each have their share of profit and employment. A nation cannot therefore be enriched by converting ploughmen into artisans; or artisans into ploughmen. If government will meddle in the direction of labour, it ought to give the preference to agriculture. Of two nations, the one devoted to agriculture, and the other to manufactures, that will be the most dependent, and its riches the most uncertain, which does not derive the source of its prosperity from the soil. Spain, without a single manufacture, under a wise government, might be the richest country in Europe,

Europe, solely by the productions of her soil, for in those she exceeds all others.

In the period of which we have been speaking, the most brilliant part is the reign of Charles the Third, and that is to be attributed solely to the liberty granted to the commerce of America, which so rapidly increased, that even England does not afford, in so short a time, a similar example.— Ferdinand the Sixth had granted permission to a company of merchants at Barcelona to trade to Hispaniola, Porto Rico, and St. Margarets, but under such restrictions that they never exercised the privilege. Charles the Third, in 1763, allowed every Spaniard liberty to trade with Havanna, Hispaniola, Porto Rico, St. Margarets, Trinidad, Louisiana, Yacatan, and Campechy, not only from the port of Cadiz, but from those of Seville, Carthagena, Barcelona, Corunna, Santandes, and Gijon; he lowered the duties five per cent. and suppressed a number of useless formalities. By these measures the commerce of America, which had been almost annihilated, began again to prosper.

Notwithstanding the happy effects which this small degree of liberty had produced, such is the force of prepossession, that fifteen years were allowed to pass without extending it, and perhaps it would not have been extended but for the strenuous efforts of the Marquis de Iranda. The Count Campomanes also did all in his power to persuade

persuade the minister Galvez of its utility, and the united efforts of these two excellent men, obtained at length the decree of the 2d of February, 1778. By this an equal liberty was granted to trade with Buenos Ayres, Chili, and Peru.— On the 16th of October, the same year, it was extended to Santa Fé and Guatemala, and adding to the number of ports before mentioned those of Malaga, Almeira, Tortosa, Palma, and Santa Cruz, in Teneriffe. By this regulation every manufactured article of Spain was freed from duty for ten years, and every ship laden with national manufactures had one-third part of the duties on exports remitted, and all the productions of the foreign possessions of Spain were, on exportation, freed from all duties whatever.

The state of population and of the customs, in the first six years of this period, cannot leave the least doubt on any honest man's mind of the wonderful effects of a free commerce. The population in 1778 was 9,307,803 souls, and in 1798 it amounted to 12,009,879, an increase due solely to the greater freedom of trade. In that same year, 1778, there sailed from the licensed ports of the Peninsula an hundred and sixty Spanish vessels for various parts of America, which was more than had sailed from thence in the five years before. A comparison between the years 1778 and 1784 gives the following result:—The value of Spanish goods

goods sent to America in 1778 amounted to 28,236,620 reals, that of foreign goods to 46,669,236 reals; the amount of the duties on these goods was 3,770,964 reals. The imports from America amounted to 74,559,256 reals, and the duties on those imports to 2,924,884 reals. The value of national goods exported to America in 1784 amounted to 188,049,504 reals, an increase in six years of 159,812,884 reals; that of foreign goods amounted to 229,365,984 reals, an increase of 182,296,748 reals. The amount of duties was 17,164,800 reals, an increase to the revenue of 13,993,836 reals; the amount of goods exported from America reached the enormous sum of 1,212,976,508 reals, an increase of 1,138,478,252 reals. Lastly, the amount of duties on goods exported from America was 50,632,632 reals, an increase to the revenue of 48,704,768 reals. In 1778, all Spain did not possess more than five hundred merchant vessels; in 1792, the coasts of Catalonia counted more than a thousand, and Cadiz more than a hundred owners. Notwithstanding the great detriment which the merchants of Cadiz apprehended would arise to their port, from the licenses granted to others, yet, in the year 1778, they exported national and foreign produce to the amount of 301,209,960 reals, which was more than for the whole four years before. In 1784 they exported to the amount of 86,914,632 reals, and in



in 1792 to that of 272,000,600 reals: and yet for all this they were not to be undeceived; even at this moment they cannot believe that their commerce can prosper when it is equally enjoyed by Spaniards and Americans.

If we consult the English customs, we shall find that they never increased so rapidly in the same space of time, though England is the most commercial nation in Europe. This prosperity has been felt, not only in the commerce, but in the arts, agriculture, industry, and population both of Spain and America, and it has been even greater from the year 1792 to 1800, which ought to convince us of the line the government ought to pursue, if it desires the prosperity of Spain.

Notwithstanding all the causes to which our best writers have attributed the decline of the nation existed in their full force, yet, on the slightest glimpse of liberty, our prosperity begins to revive and makes an incredible progress. The interests of all parts of the nation are promoted, and yet there are men who think that they are not the same, that the good of individuals can be in opposition to the general good! Our passions and our interests, however, are in perpetual opposition. Notwithstanding the happy effects of this gleam of liberty, the Spanish government was far from giving it any further extension. The idea of allowing all foreigners to trade for themselves

selves with America seemed so terrible, that no one ventured to propose it, nor would the government have ventured to decree it. But now that every individual is at liberty to express his sentiments, I can no longer refrain from promulgating what I conceive to be just and for the general good. It is by no means my wish to protect foreign commerce to the injury of our own, I only wish to make it understood that all prohibitions are equally injurious to the Spaniards and Americans. If the Spanish Americans ought to enjoy equal privileges with those of the Peninsula, how can they attempt to hinder them from receiving at the first hand those foreign goods which they now receive by commission from the Peninsula? It may be said, perhaps, that it would not be fair to deprive the Spaniards of the benefit of these commissions, and that it would be one means of lessening the consumption of foreign goods in America. Even supposing for a moment that one of these two things was true, what answer could be given to any Spaniard who should say, "If we are all members of the same society, if we ought all to enjoy an equal protection, if the law ought equally to protect us all in acquiring riches; while this is not so, where is our boasted liberty? Force alone can impose on us a contribution so burdensome, which has no other object than to enrich, at our expense, a small number of the Spanish merchants.

merchants. Oppression alone can hinder foreign merchants from coming to our markets, without which it is not possible to sell our goods at that price which a competition can alone produce."

To say nothing about the injustice, which cannot fail to be evident to every one, the prohibition of the foreign merchant to interfere in the American trade is, in the end, most injurious to all. It is to the Americans, because it compels them to buy the produce of Europe at a much dearer rate, as there are fewer sellers in the market, and obliges them to sell their own productions cheaper, because there are fewer buyers in proportion to the sellers, and of course they must sell a smaller quantity. It is a double monopoly, which disturbs that equality of prices which is so much to the advantage of all the members of a society, and which can never be expected but from a competition in the market. It is injurious to the Spaniard, for the same reason that it is to the Americans, because, being compelled to sell his goods for the American market, the greater the number of buyers the greater will be the sale, and the greater and better the sale the greater will be the quantity of goods brought to market. It is also injurious to him, because, having to buy the goods of America, it would be to his advantage that the number of sellers should be as great as possible. It is injurious to the state, because it  
is

is so to the great mass of citizens. Probably all this may seem somewhat obscure, but it is not therefore the less true. Our trade being thus a mere trade by commission, the chief gainers must be the original proprietors, for those who trade by commission are no better than mere factors. One evident proof of this is, that notwithstanding all the advantages that Spain enjoys in her commerce with America from her local situation, her produce and her monopoly, our richest commercial houses are not able to acquire capitals equal to the merchants of London, Paris, Amsterdam, and other cities of Europe; whereas, if they carried on the same trade as proprietors, there would be no reason why they should not acquire equal riches. The capital of merchants, who deal by commission, cannot be productive, because they have not the same circulation as those of merchants who are proprietors, and for the same reason, they cannot be very profitable either to their country or their employers. A trade by commission can never suit a nation which has an abundance of territory, and of hands to cultivate it, though it may suit a country like Holland, which is differently circumstanced.

It is a very pernicious error in any nation to believe that its inhabitants can be better employed in the petty gains of foreign commerce, than in producing, manufacturing, and exchanging the rich  
K productions



productions of its own soil. Spain, so far from seeking for foreign hands to be employed in her commerce with America, employed the few spare hands she possessed in the least productive part of foreign commerce, which is the carrying trade. She may be aptly compared therefore to a man possessed of a fruitful but neglected estate, which requires both great capital and industry to improve it, who lets out the labour of himself and his sons to another proprietor for the sake of a little present gain, rather than wait for the slow returns of improving his own property.

By this commerce the foreign merchant is not hindered from selling a great quantity of his goods in America, nor is there a greater sale for those of the Peninsula. All we get by it is, that we are the venders of foreign goods, and that consequently we give that employment to foreign manufacturers which we ought to give to our own. The prohibition of the foreigner to carry his own goods to the American market, so far from promoting the prosperity of Spain and diminishing that of other nations, has a directly contrary effect. It is a great error to consider as gain the profit which that trade leaves to the commissionist, to the sailors, the carpenters, and other artisans whom the trading vessels employ. Certainly, if the labour of these men could not be more usefully employed, it would be an evil to deprive them of this ;

this; but in order to form an exact calculation whether it would be more advantageous that they should be employed by foreigners or by their own nation, it ought to be proved whether we should have more sailors in a trade by commission, or in a trade of proprietors. I believe the question may be determined, by knowing that the price of freights may be considered as a kind of thermometer, to graduate the prosperity of a nation, for they are always in an inverse ratio, the richer a nation the less it will have occasion to hire foreign vessels, because it can give employment to its own, and the greater the knowledge and skill of the navigators, the dearer will be the hire of transports. It is an error to believe that, because we have few manufactures and articles of commerce, a trade by commission must therefore suit us. If, for want of capital, we cannot, all at once, be merchants and manufacturers, we can, at least, be cultivators; when agriculture is free from the restraints which have hitherto paralysed her, in a few years she will furnish us with hands and capital for other employments. Finally, it is an error to believe that the most complete liberty given to every foreigner to trade with America can be injurious to our present commission traders. —The Spaniards carried on this trade, because they had not capital to trade as proprietors, but now that they are become richer, they ought

ought to think of establishing manufactures and becoming proprietors, which will considerably increase their gains; hitherto they have been hindered by the heavy duties, and by the insecurity arising from an arbitrary government; but now that foreigners are allowed to trade in the American market, and that they can place some reliance on public honour, these capitalists will attempt to establish manufactures and trade for themselves, which will be more advantageous both to them and the nation.

We ought not to forget the great evils caused by the heavy duties on the commerce of America, by the positive prohibition of some goods, and by the monopoly of others, but neither these heavy duties, nor the prohibition of foreigners to meddle with American commerce, will answer the end proposed by government. The greater the duties on any species of merchandise, and the stronger the prohibitions, the greater will be the extent, and the greater the gain of smuggling, and all this will fall upon the consumer, for the goods of the foreign proprietor will not lose their estimation, and he will expect to make a profit equal to his risk, which is eventually an injury to the consumer. It is well known that the greatest smugglers are those very persons employed by the government to put a stop to smuggling; it would be therefore ridiculous to expect that these unprincipled

principled individuals who are employed by the government in doing evil, should always act with purity and integrity. The severest punishments have never been sufficient to put an end to smuggling, where there is a strong temptation to it, and the consequence of it is to render useless a number of useful hands that are employed both in carrying it on, and in attempting to put a stop to it. Even supposing that the persons employed by the government against smugglers were persons of the utmost integrity, it would be impossible to watch a coast of sixteen hundred leagues, like that of America, and furnished too with such a number of convenient harbours, so as totally to suppress all kind of smuggling. Could an exact calculation be formed of the value of the labour of those persons employed in smuggling and in putting a stop to it, we should soon be undeceived as to the advantage of custom-houses and high duties. The Peninsula has never had less than 150,000 useless hands in this single department. Supposing that each of these persons could gain by his labour eight reals a day, and deducting eighty festivals, in which they are allowed to be idle, the amount will be the enormous sum of 340,000,000 reals; if we add to this the same sum for America, and also the money paid to these men by the government for a useless employment, it will amount to one million millions of reals. I never



never can persuade myself that, if commerce was freed from all restrictions, any nation would be the worse for it. The produce of the labour, which is now lost, will make up the deficiency to the revenue.

The most injurious, anti-social, and unjust restriction which any government can put upon agriculture, industry, and commerce, is the monopoly of any single article; it is a declaration of war, not only against foreign nations, but against the individuals of our own, whose enjoyments it diminishes by such a restraint. It is meant to impede the prosperity of other nations, and to promote that of our own, but it is a mistaken notion.— In fact, it is nothing more than to say, that no one shall be rich but the government, and that whoever attempts it shall be punished as a delinquent. Without doubt every government has a right to a revenue equal to the great and important duties it has to discharge, but that ought never to deprive the meanest individual of the means which nature has afforded him of providing for the subsistence of himself and his family; but this deprives him even of the means to contribute to the exigencies of the state, and leaves thousands in complete indigence. As those articles, which are the subject of monopoly, are generally those of most common consumption, the evil falls both on rich and poor, but is most felt by the latter.

What

What principle of justice can dictate that the unhappy artisan or labourer of Spain should contribute equally in the articles of salt, tobacco, and brandy, with the richest nobleman? Who cannot detest a government that carries its injustice to such a pitch? Is it not a sufficient motive for detesting those ministers who, rich only at the expense of public misery, can dare to insult and degrade the poor by telling them that it is a crime to evade this contribution in the slightest degree? Is it not a proof of the basest corruption to hear men bawling in defence of licenses and monopolies? What Spaniard is there that has not known of some poor wretch compelled to seek food for his famished infants by the sale of some monopolized article, for which he was liable to pay the forfeit of his life? Can a just government, like the present, hesitate a moment to blot out the remembrance of an institution formed at the period of our utmost depression, which authorised such crimes? The country requires it, as much as every individual. Perish every Spaniard who would evade or delay so indispensable a measure! May every monopoly, privilege, and patent disappear both in Spain and America!— May every citizen be free to seek his subsistence by the sweat of his brow, and may all equally find it! Let every man contribute to the support of the government under which he finds protection,

tection, but let it be in a just proportion, and when all are safe and free, which is the chief object of government, property will be respected. I speak of that property which every individual acquires by his own industry, and which depends on the free choice of his employment or profession. If the government monopolizes a single article, or deprives a single individual of the property he can derive from his industry or ingenuity, let it not require of him to contribute to its support, for it deprives him of the means of supporting a family, which, in place of the service it may do the country, will be led to commit crimes which will recoil with infamy upon the constitution. Let the Spanish government imitate, in this respect, the most enlightened nations; let it not follow the examples of those which are oppressed by despotism, and reserved for Napoleon to render their oppression complete.

If we are agreed in this fundamental maxim, that the riches of a government consists in the riches of individuals, it is easy to see that every restraint or monopoly must be in opposition to this principle. The dearer any article is, the less will be its consumption among a certain class of citizens, and the greater number will be deprived of the benefit which the sale and cultivation of that article ought to produce. No government monopolises any article except for the sake of the gain

gain it expects from its exclusive sale, such article must therefore be enhanced in price. The greater the gain therefore, the greater the injury to society, because a greater number will be deprived of the benefit arising from its consumption. The greater the number of articles monopolised, so much the greater will be the number of hands taken from agriculture and industry, to be employed in protecting the monopoly of the government.

Those who were employed in the revenue being interested in satiating their avarice, by means of such ruinous contributions, have easily induced the government to believe that the revenue arising from these monopolies is all clear gain, and a species of ready money raised without complaint or grievance. They pretended that every citizen in part, or in the whole, could limit his consumption of these articles, and that no one was obliged to take more of them than he chose. Although the people were not forced to consume all these articles, as was the case sometimes in Spain with salt, yet they were not free, for they were forced to go without articles of the first necessity for want of means to purchase them. The unhappy labourer and artisan have only one resource, which is to lessen their expenses, though they do not live in affluence or plenty. The greatest evil must fall upon them, and in proportion as they lessen their consumption,



consumption, the receipts of the revenue must be diminished. I will not stop to describe the vexations to which the culture of tobacco is subject from the officers of the revenue, by compelling the industrious labourer to cultivate that which perhaps is only destined for the fire, when the revenue can afford it, to hinder its being sold even to natives, because it is a species of monopoly, and to strangers, lest they should smuggle it back again. The lot of this unhappy set of men depends on the arbitrary and covetous disposition of a commission merchant, and they may labour for a whole year for the sole privilege of being allowed to buy at a low price the fruits of their own labour. This is a species of injustice which cries out to heaven for redress, and which no man of sensibility can hear without astonishment; and this injustice can only be repaired by completely abolishing all those pernicious institutions, pernicious both to individuals and to the revenue. To set all things to rights nothing more is requisite than to leave every one to do as he will with the fruits of his labour, and the best minister of Finance is not he who forms these institutions, but he who puts an end to them all.

Every individual will act as he conceives best suits his interests, while he is protected by the law. Let Spain then, which has hitherto been a nation of useless idlers, be converted into a nation  
of

of labourers, artisans, and merchants, and her prosperity will soon shine forth again with all its splendour. Let us not be dazzled with deceitful projects; there is no means of enriching a nation but by giving the most complete liberty to all her exertions, there is no means of counting upon the co-operation and affection of America but by giving her the same degree of liberty; there is no other means of reconciling the interests of all, and drawing the greatest number of hands to objects of useful industry, from which alone, and not from gold and silver, results the true riches of a nation.

Let us now consider the third cause to which I have attributed the decline of Spain, to wit, the quantity of gold and silver which came from America, and in the abundance of which, after three centuries of experience, we yet conceive our chief happiness to consist. All nations believe themselves richer than others in proportion as they possess a greater quantity of these metals, and all suffer the same illusion. These metals being adopted by all nations as the representatives of commodities, and believing that nothing can be wanting to those who have money, we consider them as the chief wealth. But whatever estimation these may be held in, it is not in their abundance in which their value consists, nor even in themselves when they obtain this value, but in the abundance

abundance of those commodities which reproduce themselves for our consumption. Therefore it is better for a nation to possess those of which money is only a sign, than money itself in abundance. To have considered money as the greatest riches, is an error equal to that of having said, that to a certain point it is not riches. Spain, by the conquest of the New World, became the sole possessor of gold and silver in Europe. When nations or individuals become slowly rich by industry, they are by necessity economical, because they find it requisite, but when money flows in suddenly upon them, they become profuse and extravagant.

The Spaniards who went to America, particularly those employed by government, acquired immense fortunes in a few years. No other mode of getting rich was known in Spain, but that of taking a voyage, and bringing back a great deal of money, which they called *getting an India*.—When these men, or their heirs, returned to the Peninsula, they increased their expenses, took a great number of men from useful labour as servants, and brought a vast quantity of money into circulation, which, like all other kinds of goods, has a relative value, and falls or sinks in proportion to its abundance or scarcity. Whenever a nation increases its circulating medium by one-half, that which before cost one ounce of silver, will

will cost two, yet it would be ridiculous to suppose a man richer by having two ounces than by having but one ounce. The quantity of money is greater, but the value in commodities is not greater, because only the same quantity is represented by the two ounces as by the one, that is, two ounces will buy no more than one did before. It is not sufficient to compare the quantity of gold and silver at different times, to know if a nation is more or less rich. If these metals, when coined, are the measure of the value of all other commodities, the value of these is also the measure of the value of money. To say, for example, that twenty doubloons will purchase a horse, is to say that such a horse is the measure of the value of twenty doubloons; but, since nations have made greater use of money, they have taken it as the common measure of all things, and have considered it as a positive measure, as it might be formerly on account of its scarcity, that is, they considered money independent of every relation, or as a thing which, by its nature, measures all other things, and is not measured by any. This error, chiefly since the discovery of America, has become a principle of commerce, and has induced all governments to graduate the value of money solely by its quantity and intrinsic qualities, without comparing it with other things; in consequence of which they have adopted the pernicious system,



system of forbidding its exportation, and this error will cause all nations to suffer the greatest extremes of opulence and misery. Let us now see what has happened to Spain, in order to conjecture what will happen to other nations, who may possess a superabundance of money. As soon as ever a greater quantity of money was put in circulation than had been before the discovery of America, every thing began to grow extremely dear, and money in proportion to sink in value. Money in general loses its value from these causes, which all seemed to be united in Spain. It loses its value by becoming more plentiful, by the diminution of laborious hands, for in all countries when labour becomes dearer, commodities must increase in price, and consequently money must decrease in value, for the same quantity of it will purchase less than before; finally, it loses its value by the increase of taxes, which always withdraws a number of hands from industry, diminishes the quantity of commodities, increase their price, and consequently lessens the value of money. Even when taxes do not reduce many of those who pay them to beggary, it diminishes the value of money. The price of the surplus commodities of every individual will always be in proportion to his consumption and his taxes; that is, if a little farmer after harvest sold the surplus produce of his wheat, and with that surplus bought other  
 other

other things requisite for his subsistence, in the event of a new tax, he must either sell the same quantity of wheat at a greater price, or be deprived of some essential comfort. The same will happen with all other ranks of people, they must sell the produce of their industry at a higher price to pay the new tax, and of course that will diminish the value of money.

Fresh quantities of money arrived every day from America, and every day the evils of the country increased, without the cause being found out; all kinds of commodities grew dearer and diminished in quantity. The other nations of Europe, who neither possessed so great a quantity of money, nor mines so productive, held it in greater estimation, that is, they sold their produce and manufactures at a much lower price. The Spaniards daily increased their purchases from foreign nations, every day their own labourers and manufacturers decreased; consequently the riches of the nation, and its prosperity began to decline with a velocity almost incredible. Any other country not having so fine a climate, nor so fertile a soil, would have become a desert, if, on a sudden, it had acquired so much gold and silver, which, so far from being true wealth, are in excess the cause of depopulation and misery. The writers of Spain, not knowing the true cause of her decline, ascribed it to such

as were merely incidental, or rather the effects of an excess of the precious metals. The most impartial foreign writers ascribed it to the same mistaken causes, and the most partial ones to an apathy which they supposed to be the national character, never considering that the same nation which had so lately been one of the most industrious in Europe, could not so soon change its character, though it might have changed its habits; they never considered that, at the moment when she began to decline from her prosperity, Spain was one of the most warlike nations in Europe, a character which ill suits with that of indolence or apathy.

Spain, from the discovery of the New World, began to hasten to her ruin, and the government, so far from suspecting the cause, adopted measures which only accelerated the evil, for as the thirst of money was the consequence; like water to a man in a dropsy, so the constant supply of gold and silver only the more relaxed her energy and hastened her decline. Almost every day some new tax was imposed, which reduced to beggary those hands which had hitherto been useful, and contributed to supply the necessities of the state; every day some fresh article was engrossed, which deprived of subsistence the families of the poor; every day forbid the importation of some foreign produce, which was requisite for  
the

the support of population; every day forbid the exportation of some national production, which was a source of support to many individuals; every day opened a new mine in America, which lessened the value of money, and in proportion to its abundance, so much the more difficult it became to restore the national prosperity. For the space of two centuries after the discovery of America, Spain supported immense armies in Italy, Germany, Holland, and Flanders, which consumed the treasures of the nation, and even obliged her to contract heavy debts. The Spaniards, whose manufactures and agriculture had fallen into a miserable state of decline, not only purchased manufactured goods from other nations, but even corn, for their home consumption. Thus it was that Spain was only a sort of channel or canal, through which the wealth of America flowed in to other nations. In proportion, therefore, as money became abundant in other nations, provisions and manufactures became dearer, and cost the more to Spain. Money doubled and tripled itself, and the price of commodities of all kinds increased in a geometrical progression.

The re-establishment of manufactures and commerce, and consequently that of agriculture, became every day more difficult, because, money daily losing its value, much greater sums were requisite for these undertakings than before. The

L

other



other nations of Europe daily became richer by the mistaken policy of Spain, though they might have been more truly rich, had they adopted a different system, but their situation did not permit them to commit the errors which she committed. Although they considered money as the first species of wealth, and forbid its exportation, yet, as soon as it began to lose its value, it was smuggled from those countries in which it was depreciated into those where it was of more worth. On that account, and because they possessed no abundant mines, they never had such an abundance of it as to injure their manufactures; but Spain, who had no other harvest than her gold and silver, after she had begun to neglect the principal source of her riches, as these metals were depreciated, so she became ruined. There is a considerable difference between productions of consumption and productions like gold and silver, which are not consumed. The greater the abundance of the former, the greater is their consumption, and consequently the production of the human species. The cultivation of articles of consumption is an inexhaustible source of property, the more it is drawn upon the more it produces. The cultivation of the other is a source of misery and depopulation, the more they increase the less they are worth, the greater their abundance the greater the difficulty of re-producing the human species.—

How

How happy would Spain have been, had an earthquake swallowed up these mines of gold and silver, and if in their room she had possessed vallies abounding with harvests and herds of cattle.

The precious metals, when converted into money, become an object of commerce, for when coined they receive a new name and an authentic stamp, which serves to determine their quantity and quality, and to guard against frauds, but this stamp can give them no other value but as articles of commerce, which they derive from the convention or agreement of men. The legislator can give them no higher value than that which they originally possess, with the addition of the expense of coinage; should he attempt to enforce a higher value by penalties and punishments, the ruin of the nation would inevitably be the consequence. The value of money therefore depends not on the will of the legislator, but on that of public opinion. Doubtless the invention of money has confounded the true ideas of the value of things. Seeing the same measure constantly used to regulate the price of goods, it was believed that this measure had a positive value, or an arbitrary one at the will of the prince. It was not believed that an ounce of gold lost somewhat of its value when coined, by coining another ounce, but that it had at all times the same actual worth. The Spanish government, holding these false ideas of

money, drew a regular inference from a false principle; they believed money at all times to possess the same value, and therefore by increasing it; they thought they increased the riches of the nation. Even when they saw that other commodities were rising in value, or, what is the same thing, that money was sinking, they could not be persuaded to attribute the former to any other cause than the increase of consumers, and the latter to its scarcity. It is not therefore to be wondered that they never attempted to remedy what they did not understand.

Gold and silver ought to be allowed a free entry and exit in Spain as well as all other goods, because they are articles which Spain almost solely possesses and cannot consume. The conduct of other nations in that respect ought to be no rule to us, because they are not in similar circumstances; they have not the same quantity of it, therefore it can never do them the same injury. Let us suppose that the quantity in circulation was sixteen times more than it has ever been, even with three times the population, it would be of sixteen times less worth. Whatever be the quantity of money in circulation, it can never be more than equal to the value of the commodities consumed in the space of a year. To purchase a lamb in the market, which formerly cost an ounce of silver, we must give a pound, and yet the value of the ounce

ounce will be equal to that of the pound, and therefore we are not better for the fifteen ounces, it will be more difficult to carry about and more difficult to keep. Government therefore ought to give up the working mines on their own account, and leave it to individuals to do it unassisted.

The experience of three centuries ought to undeceive us as to the effect of gold and silver on the happiness and prosperity of the nation. It is not meant that we should have no gold and silver, far otherwise. The possession of these metals will always be an infallible proof of national riches and prosperity; but money should only be the effect of other commodities, that is, it should only be in proportion to the actual value of these commodities, or else no quantity of it will be sufficient, as experience has shewn.

Besides the advantages which Spain will derive from the free exportation of gold and silver, America will also be greatly benefited. Provisions will be at a lower price, population will be greater than it has ever been, as it will always be in proportion to the means of subsistence; riches of every kind will be more abundant and less precarious, because they will be in proportion to the produce of labour, and thus the interests of the Americans and Spaniards being reconciled, as well as those of other nations, they will not find  
a desire



a desire to separate America from Spain for what they conceive to be their own good.

On a candid examination of what I have advanced, it will be found that it is not difficult to reconcile the interests of all men, the only difficulty is to reconcile their passions. If we reflect that, according to the present policy of nations, their great object is to ruin each other, we are furnished with another motive to detest rather than admire it. Their constant wars, their immense debts, their interminable hatreds, the little confidence to be placed in their prosperity, are all so many proofs that no nation has yet arrived at its greatest felicity, that their present system of policy has no other object than to do each other all the harm they can, and that it has great need of amendment. All seek to enjoy exclusively the advantages of commerce, without considering that commerce ought to be equally beneficial to all, for the freedom of commerce is the only thing which can reconcile all interests, and ensure the general happiness of mankind. Spain, which has given so many proofs of her desire for civil liberty, and which has made so many sacrifices to obtain it, as she deserves to be admired for her virtues, so ought she to aspire at the glory of being admired for her wisdom. She ought to be the first to establish a system which may ensure not only her own prosperity,

prosperity, but that of other nations; thus only can she be secure and undisturbed: the experience of the past ought to convince her that it is impossible to enjoy exclusive property. A wise system of administration will ensure her internal felicity; a wise system of customs, which shall admit all nations to trade with her on the payment of a moderate duty, so as to put an end to smuggling, will assure to her the preservation of her foreign possessions, will preserve her against the attacks of other nations, will rapidly increase her prosperity, and reconcile her for ever to America.

Although I had merely intended to point out the abuses which had separated the interests of Spain and America, it seems not foreign to the subject, to shew that the system of *customs* is the principal cause of the dissensions between all nations and the ruin of all societies, and that if their abolition was unanimously adopted, incalculable advantages would be the result, and the bonds of society would every day become stronger and stronger, and yet considering that the establishment of customs is so general, and that the wisest nations have believed them to be the great cause of their prosperity, an assertion to the contrary may probably seem too bold and adventurous. Without doubt, the great calamities which nations the most prosperous even now suffer, the enormous debts

debts they contract, and the constant variations of their prosperity, evidently prove that their system of finance is defective. No nation in all Europe gives the hopes of so great things as Spain; should she succeed in establishing her independence, she will probably effect a change in the political system of the world. Great undertakings, without any motive of ambition, and reforms which may contribute to the general tranquillity, ought to be her only objects. Her efforts and her virtues have been so much the more admired, in proportion as they were less to be expected from a nation sunk for three hundred years in despotism and abasement. For that reason she is the first to whom it properly belongs to commence those reforms which may contribute so much to the good of mankind, and to put an end to the system of customs, the inexhaustible source of modern wars, and the ruin of empires. I will briefly set down the principal arguments by which this opinion is supported in the works of the most eminent writers.

Customs were at first established solely to defray the expenses of the state, and were invented by the Roman Emperor Augustus. In order to strengthen his usurped authority, by concealing from the people the taxes he imposed on them, he contrived to have at his disposal a considerable sum, without applying to the people for fresh subsidies. Charles the First of Spain, equally  
fertile

fertile in expedients to promote his ambitious designs, and keep the people subservient to his will, revived this institution, which had been long disused and forgotten, and since his time, customs have been considered by the wisest governments as an establishment admirably calculated to increase the prosperity of a nation, by hindering that competition with others which might impede the progress of its industry and commerce. All sensible men, who have defended the utility of customs, have nevertheless allowed that, considered in the first light, they can never be advantageous, for such a contribution must inevitably be unequal, and consequently unjust and pernicious, and notwithstanding the utmost vigilance of government, it will always be in some degree evaded. The collection of customs must inevitably be very expensive, on account of the number of persons employed to hinder illicit trade or smuggling.— And on this account it must be pernicious, because it takes a number of useful hands from agriculture, industry, and commerce, which are the only true sources of national prosperity. The general opinion, however, is much on the side of customs, considered in the second light, and it is in this view that they are chiefly defended. I am far from hoping to be able to place the subject in a light sufficiently strong to convince the rest of the world of the impolicy of customs, but I per-  
haps



haps may excite others of more knowledge and greater talents to explain the subject with all the force and clearness of which it is capable.

It may be asked the defenders of customs, which of the two nations, England and Spain, would be injured, if a treaty was concluded to admit the produce and manufactures of each country into the other free of all duties; and I believe an honest man would find himself much puzzled to answer the question, which is sufficient to shew that the subject is at least doubtful. The generality of the English, however, would answer at once, that such a treaty would be ruinous to England; they would say that the soil of Spain produces a much greater variety of commodities than that of England, that they are produced at less expense on account of the climate, because in England the same produce requires ten times the labour; that therefore the raw materials of England could not come into any competition in the market with those of Spain, and that of course the agriculture of England, which is the greatest source of her riches, would be ruined. It would be said, also, that Spain produces many things which are not produced in England, such as wine and oil, which, being now very dear, on account of the duties, and therefore only articles of luxury, if they were cheap, would become articles of common consumption to the injury of national produce,

produce, and that England would soon be impoverished by paying enormous sums for these articles in money, having no others to equal them of her own. It might be said also, that Spain possesses many other things which England has not, and yet makes much use of; but that it is better for her to bring them from India, because it is better to enrich distant nations than those which, being so near her, may soon be her rivals.

The Spaniard, on the other side, having a respect for an establishment of such antiquity, and of which the best economists have written in defence, will say that the manufactures of Spain being much inferior to those of England, if those of the latter were freely admitted, Spain would never think of improving her own; he would say, also, that the raw materials of Spain would thus become a source of riches to England and of poverty to herself; he would say, that it is impolitic to enrich a nation, which, though now a friend, may, in a few years, become an enemy.

All persons see the evils that would follow, but few see the advantages. All nations seem to wish to make treaties of commerce, which are reciprocally useful, and yet no one wishes to establish the total freedom of commerce, which would be useful to all, and put an end to all grounds of dissension and quarrels. They do not consider that commerce is the exchange of labour, reciprocally useful,

useful, that it matters not whether that labour is employed in producing raw materials or manufactured goods; that if Spain gains by the labour of the one, England will gain in the labour of the other; that when there is a complete liberty of commerce between two nations, there will be an equality of value; the ploughman will gain as much as the artisan, and the artisan as much as the manufacturer; that it is for their mutual convenience that this equilibrium is preserved, and this equilibrium is equally as advantageous for nations as for individuals, for the moment one nation becomes more rich than another in the precious metals, the period of its decline commences. The dearer the productions of the earth are, the higher will be the price of labour, and then will begin the consumption of the merchandise of the poorer nations, as being at a lower price; at the same time a rich nation begins to increase its consumption, on account of its increased necessities; while a poor one is economical from habit, until circumstances induce it to commit a similar fault. The disturbance of the balance of riches will always cause a revolution in agriculture and commerce, and a complete liberty can alone give it a permanent duration. That which happened to Spain by the discovery of America, and the full enjoyment of its riches, must happen to all other nations, from the system of customs when they  
cause

cause a superabundance of gold and silver, which is the ultimate object of their establishment. In proportion as a nation possesses a greater number of rich individuals, it will have fewer labourers, it will have less increase of population, it will have a greater emigration to cheaper countries. What would happen if all should be rich in money? There would be neither labourer nor artisan, every branch of prosperity would decline, or gold and silver would cease to be considered valuable, because it would no longer serve to maintain individuals in their accustomed stations.

All nations have some productions analogous to their soil, which it produces with greater facility than others, and require some of the productions of others to satisfy those various wants which form the pleasures of life in large societies.— Commerce causes the productions of the north to be enjoyed in the south, and those of the south to be enjoyed in the north. The system of customs compels them to cultivate those productions which are not natural to their soil, rather than contribute to enrich those nations where they are naturally produced. No nation is content to cultivate or manufacture the productions of its own soil, which it might have in abundance, and with which it might acquire the superfluities of others, and all become rich. Each aims at cultivating not only for its own consumption, but for the consumption of



of other nations, and for this end customs are considered requisite, though they must eventually be the ruin of all. By these means, commerce, which ought to be the bond of union and friendship among nations, becomes a perennial source of injustice, dissention, and war. Few men have considered that no nation possesses sufficient hands to manufacture all its produce which others require, nor land sufficient to produce the raw materials, and that if they attempt to lay obstacles in the way of each other, they will only succeed in depriving each other of the power to supply their necessities and receive mutual advantage. All nations believe themselves injured by admitting the produce of other nations, but to be certain of that, they only consider what they cannot produce themselves, and never calculate the value of their labour employed in the cultivation of other produce more natural, and other manufactures more analogous to their productions. It is nature that teaches man to satisfy his necessities, nature is therefore the author of commerce, and nothing can so much counteract this natural propensity as the establishment of customs, which so ridiculously pretends to be the conqueror of nature. Commerce naturally inclines men to consider all nations as one great society; the establishment of customs is the most infernal instrument that could have been invented to paralyse this benevolent disposition,

disposition, by maintaining enmity and rivalry among nations, and thus depriving them of the pleasures they might enjoy if each partook of the productions of all. It is not considered in this system, that the greater the prosperity of the nations we deal with, the greater will be their population, and consequently the greater will be the number of buyers, and in the same proportion our own population will increase. The freedom of commerce is that which causes this reciprocal prosperity, and promotes the general interest.— Customs are directly in opposition to these reciprocal advantages, for they were established for the purpose of concentrating all in one, and thus in a few years prove the ruin of all. It is the most ridiculous inconsistency to aim at being rich by the commerce of another nation, and yet seek to keep that nation poor, which is the direct end and object of customs. The present destructive system of a continental blockade ought to open the eyes of all men upon this subject, for no period was ever so ruinous to commerce, or produced so many bankruptcies in all nations: No measure ever presented so dismal a prospect for the future, nor carried to so high a pitch the boasted system of customs. It proves how much all nations depend on each other, that no one can exist by itself, and that all are indebted for their prosperity to the mutual advantages

tages of commerce, and that they flourish or decline according as that is free or restrained.

Even when customs aim at nothing more than to increase the revenue by laying restraints on the exportation of national produce, they are pernicious, on account of their effects on agriculture and industry, because they impede the sale of these articles in competition with foreigners, who are subject to no similar imposition. Almost all nations have corrected this error, at least in part, for customs in this point of view can do no possible good. It was, however, still believed to be right to charge national produce with heavy duties on exportation, or to forbid it altogether, in two cases, that is to say, first, on raw materials, whose manufacture might promote the prosperity of other nations, as the silks of France and Spain, and the wool of England; we have seen the ill effects of that measure in Spain, and they were not less in the two other countries. The second case alluded to was when the produce was the natural produce of the country, where it was taxed, because it was thought that the whole weight of the tax would fall on other nations.—Spain affords a sufficient proof of the consequences of this error; she was, and is yet, the only possessor of barilla, in Europe, an article of the first necessity, especially among the northern nations, —The Spanish government, relying upon the exclusive

exclusive possession of this commodity, and the want of it in other countries, loaded its exportation with heavy duties, the consequence of which was, that these nations either contrived a substitute for it, or sent for it from India, so that in a few years the cultivation of it was abandoned in Spain, and thus the government found out an excellent method of depriving the nation of one of the greatest natural advantages she possessed; the happy result of a measure which was intended to distress other nations.

The greatest benefit, however, which economists pretend to derive from the system of customs, is in taxing foreign commodities, and they persuade themselves that it is the only method of raising the national industry on the ruins of foreign industry, by hindering them from coming in competition, and hindering the money being sent out of the nation. "Must not," say they, "our manufactures decline, when we prefer foreign goods to our own? We must therefore lay a restraint upon importation by fresh taxes, and take off a part of those laid upon our exportation, we shall then see the good effects of the wise system of customs, we shall then advance in prosperity, like such or such a nation, which has always promoted the exportation of its own commodities, and laid heavy duties on importation." The most foolish courtier that ever existed would have been

M

able



able to invent such a system as this is, and so it has happened, that all nations who have adopted it under the idea of becoming rich have become poor, or at least they have been indebted to other causes for their prosperity. The advocates for this system, never perceived the fallacy of their own principles; they never perceived that the advantages it produced were either imaginary or temporary. If customs served, as they were intended, to restrain foreign industry, it would follow that no nation could prosper when customs were generally established. For instance, when Spain had reduced the industry of France, by ceasing to purchase her manufactures, France of course would do the same to Spain. Which of the two nations would be gainer, we must learn from those profound politicians, who so blindly defend the system of customs; they see only its boasted advantages, but never think of the real injuries it occasions, they see not that even when they deprive their rival of a certain good, it is at the expense of an equal loss to themselves, with the addition of other incalculable evils; they see not that the less one nation buys of another, the less it has to sell, to produce, and to manufacture, that commerce is only a reciprocity of advantages, and that even were it possible for one nation to part with all its own superfluous produce for nothing but money, its commerce would

would soon decline on account of the high price of labour, and it could not long support a competition with foreign markets. The men of whom we are speaking shut their eyes and their ears to experience, and did not wish to see that money will every where cause a plethora equal to that of Spain and Portugal, and that it has produced the ruin of these two nations, as it would have caused that of England, if she had not undergone those copious bleedings which were requisite to preserve her prosperity, so often threatened by her great enemy,—excessive wealth.

The science of political economy, so difficult to understand when wrapped up in subtleties; is most easy when reduced to the result of experience. Its propositions then arise naturally from one another as so many corollaries or propositions successively identical, which consist of simple and intelligible truths. Governments, accustomed to graduate their own power by the weakness of their rivals, and the increase of their riches by the decline of others wealth, never imagine that they have assumed a very erroneous standard. It may serve to shew the greater or lesser degrees of power and riches, but not to shew who are really rich and powerful: this error would signify little if it were not for its consequences, but unfortunately they are most pernicious, for they cause it to be considered as the

principal maxim of policy to do every thing possible to weaken their enemies, or those that may become such, and that they can only be rich at the expense of their rivals; they perceive not that the effect of this principle is to make every one their rival; they see not that the establishment of customs is in direct opposition to every liberal and generous principle; they see not that by hindering the free commerce of other nations within their dominions, they deprive themselves of the same advantage; they see not that besides depriving themselves of this mutual benefit, they reduce to indigence innumerable families, who might easily find subsistence if they could buy at a low price the productions of foreign nations, and sell their own at a greater; they see not that they compel many to be robbers for want of subsistence, neither do they consider that the customs constitute a further capital than is requisite for commerce, which they thus contribute to ruin, so far from supporting, because they deprive many citizens of the benefit of trade, who, by their good character, might begin to trade upon credit, by thus requiring the advance of the duties, which is a sort of capital, by anticipation. Finally, they never reflect that the produce of the labour of that immense world of beggars, robbers, smugglers, custom-house officers, tide-waiters, &c. who are maintained, or who starve in idleness, would amount to much more than

than the produce of the customs themselves, and more than is taken from other nations.

Let us consult the history of the world, and it will be found an error to believe that any one nation has ever owed its prosperity, or even the slightest benefit to the establishment of customs; and that sooner or later they will be the ruin of all. If we attend to the decline of Spain, we shall find that it began with the establishment of customs, notwithstanding that the causes to which it is usually ascribed existed before, and notwithstanding they had not then a new world more rich in silver and gold than the old one; we shall find, that though these causes existed, its situation was improved while it enjoyed the liberty of commerce. If we consult the history of the prosperity of England, we shall find that it arose from the abolition of those obstructions, which took so many hands from agriculture and industry, the want of which liberty deprived Spain of so many useful labourers at different periods since the time of Charles the First; but to the system of customs England owes nothing but wars and disputes. We shall find too, that notwithstanding its boasted Navigation Act and its corn laws, which form the principal part of its system of customs, the expenses which these cost amount to more than the whole property of the English nation. We shall find too, that notwithstanding the economical management

of



of the public taxes, so different from the profuse and uncontrolled expenditure of other European nations, England expends her whole revenue in support of this establishment, besides having a debt funded and unfunded, which, on the 1st of January, 1810, amounted to £811,698,081. We shall find too, that the interest of this debt, contracted solely in support of the custom-house system, amounts to nearly the annual value of all her exports, a system which is the vortex that swallows up the enormous expenses of the English nation, which hinders the tranquil enjoyment of its industry; which keeps it in perpetual alarm for its prosperity, and can never have any other effect; even could she always live at peace, than to ruin its industry by enhancing the price of labour, and thus destroying its competition with foreign markets. The effects of this system on the most fertile and the most industrious nations of Europe sufficiently prove, that it is a gross error to imagine that any nation can be indebted to it for its prosperity. It is no less an error to believe that customs, even at the expense of so many evils, can be of any service in promoting industry or commerce. Spain is a proof to the contrary. The manufactory of *druggs*, established at Seville, was one of the best in Europe, and one of the most useful to Spain, on account of her great consumption of that article. The government, for the sake  
of

of this manufactory, laid a heavy duty on all foreign druggets. The English merchants, thus seeing themselves deprived of so advantageous a branch of commerce, formed a company in order to ruin the manufacturers of Seville, and to make it impossible for any Spaniard to rival them; by these means they contrived to smuggle one half and pay the duties on the other half imported, and yet to sell the article lower than it could possibly be manufactured in Spain. The consequence of this was, that in a few years the manufactory of Seville was ruined, and the English remained sole masters of this branch of commerce. The English would never have thought of such measures, if the Spanish government had chosen rather to load the English druggets with duties, and had assisted them with capital to establish more manufactories of the same kind, with which no foreigner could have vied after the manufacture was sufficiently known in Spain; considering she possessed the raw materials at the cheapest rate, and of the best quality. Liberty is the only sure protection which a government can afford to all individuals. Whenever any foreign material is loaded with duties, or totally prohibited, it generally happens that it serves only to increase smuggling, and ruin the national merchandise, as with the druggets of Seville; it has also the effect of spoiling the manufacture, because, when a merchant

merchant is sure of selling his goods at any rate; no pains will be taken to give them any improvement. It is the interest of every individual merchant to have as few competitors as possible, and to be at as little expense as possible, but this is not the general interest. Liberty is the only means of securing equitable prices, and improvement of the manufactures. When the industry of a nation is well applied, there is little fear of competition, because all the expense of carriage from other nations is saved. When it is not well employed, then competition is a benefit to the nation, because it will be a means of stimulating to improvement.

If arguments so strong can be found against the system of customs, considered only as a subject of political economy, how much more weighty reasons will the moralist find for detesting so iniquitous and anti-social an institution. It is this which lays such a restraint on all nations, as to hinder them from enjoying the blessings afforded them by the bounty of nature. It is this which fomented hatred, envy, and jealousy. It is this which separates nations from each other by insuperable barriers, which opposes itself to the enjoyment of those natural propensities which the Author of nature has implanted in all men, in order to render their union and co-operation more complete. The genius of evil could not have invented

invented anything more opposite to the general good, humanity has not an enemy less generous, more implacable, and more immoral; such folly cannot be carried to a greater extreme than to suppose that such an establishment can be advantageous to any nation, at any period of the world.

Representatives of the Spanish people, who have granted them the liberty of the press; that every citizen might be re-established in his most precious rights, you, to whom are confided the national salvation and the power of making voluntary reforms, if you wish to reconcile the interests of the Americans and the Spaniards, and to perpetuate the prosperity of Spain, you must begin by renouncing that spirit of rivalry and enmity which has ruined all the nations of Europe. Persuade yourselves of this undeniable truth, that the political as well as the natural world can exist only by mutual co-operation and dependence; the friend of his country is therefore the friend of all mankind; he who would limit this love to one nation, or to one people, mistakes his own true interest, and is actuated by a spirit of pride or injustice.

Representatives of the Spanish people; it belongs to you to establish such a regulation of customs as to unite the interest of Spain with that of all other nations; but if you wish to make a reform the most useful, the most noble, and the most just that ever was intended or effected, abolish

abolish forever the whole establishment of customs, the continuance of which can only end in final ruin and desolation. . . . Were Spain the only nation to adopt this measure, it is true that she could not expect to derive all the advantages from it she might expect when adopted by others, but it would have many good effects and no bad ones, even in this light. In opposition to this, however, it might be said that we can have no motive to open our ports to any other nation which lays restraints on our commerce; and if every other nation was to say the same, all would be mutually seeking their own ruin, and never open their eyes to their true interest. Manufactures, perhaps, will gain little by it at first; but it is a gross mistake to say that they will not soon feel its good effects. Let us suppose that Spain should at this moment grant a free importation and exportation to all articles whatever, if our ports would immediately be full of foreign goods, it might be said, we should soon be drained of almost all our specie; and supposing this to happen, it would be no great evil, for the money that remained would be of the same value that money is now, and the nation, so far from being a loser, would be a very great gainer, as I have before attempted to prove. The produce of our agriculture would increase, and rise in value from the increased consumption and competition; the



the great mass of consumers, which is the labourers, artisans, and proprietors, would not consume foreign produce without selling their own to advantage. In proportion to the increased sale of foreign goods, will be the increase of national goods and national population. It is a great error to imagine that our manufactures will decline in consequence of a competition with those of other countries, and this arises from supposing a consumption always the same, or without any other variation than that which arises from a difference of population, and which consuming in one nation a given quantity of manufactured goods, and that the less foreign goods that are used, there will be a greater quantity of national manufactures consumed; but it is not so, the more foreign goods there are imported, the lower they will be sold, and consequently the means of subsistence will be more abundant, the greater will be the number of consumers, who will contribute by the production of their labour to the support of the state, and the smaller the number of idle hands who are compelled to beg for a living, and swallow up the produce of the few labourers who remain.— On the other hand it is impossible that the agriculture of a nation should be improved, without a proportionate increase of industry and commerce. Although it may be said the superior knowledge of machinery which other nations possess will impede

impede the progress of our manufactures; if we allow a free importation from other countries, it may be affirmed that the labour saved by this knowledge is not so great as to enable them to rival our manufactures; for though foreign manufacturers possess this advantage, ours, it must be considered, save all the expense of carriage, have better raw materials to work upon, and have both provisions and labour cheaper. Besides, this superior knowledge of machinery is not the exclusive possession of any nation, so that we cannot in time acquire it; neither is it so great as we imagine; nor does it extend to articles of common manufacture, which are the chief riches of a nation; and even supposing that our inferiority in this respect were as great as it is pretended, there is no other method of remedying it than by a total freedom of commerce, and wherever this is permitted, there will be no want of talents or ingenuity to ensure the improvement of the arts. Liberty and security of persons and property will soon bring us artists from all countries. It is this which has procured England superior artists ever since the time of Elizabeth, and caused the rapid prosperity of that nation, and the want of it has driven them from Spain since the time of Philip the Third. Should the Spanish nation be fortunate enough to obtain a good constitution, men of talents and capital will hasten to settle in  
a country,

a country, which no other can then deprive of its superior advantages; Spain will henceforth become the land of promise.

Should the other nations of Europe, finding at length that the advantages of commerce are mutual, consent to allow it a total freedom, they will all feel the benefit of so wise a resolution, but Spain will feel it much more than others. It has been often said in the course of this book, and it cannot be too often repeated, that agriculture, arts, and commerce are the only source of riches. Without arts and without commerce a nation may possess raw materials, but without these she can neither have commerce nor industry. Nations purely agricultural may exist by themselves, but nations that are chiefly engaged in commerce or manufactures require the aid of others. All prosperity that has not agriculture for its foundation, is precarious and uncertain. Every nation which prefers arts and commerce to agriculture, or which, possessing sufficient hands to these three branches, prefers arts or commerce to agriculture, or restrains its progress by not permitting the free exportation of all its produce, thus depriving them of a great part of their true value, understands not its own interest. Should it attempt to convert its labourers into artisans, to the injury of agriculture, not permitting the free exportation of raw materials, that they may be manufactured at home, such

such a nation would prefer a dependent and uncertain species of labour to one that is independent and secure. Every nation, and particularly Spain, whose soil is so fertile, and whose agriculture is so cramped, will not be more rich for possessing a greater number of manufactories, but it will be so by possessing a greater number of labourers, and it will be most independent when the greater part of its labour is employed in producing raw materials. Spain may be said to be in one of these two situations, either that of being able to sell flax for a million of dollars, and to purchase cloth to the same amount, or in that of purchasing flax for a million of dollars, and selling cloth for the same money; she will be more independent in the first case, because she will have more buyers, and because, even though she should not, this want will be less felt, because the labourers who cultivated the flax will immediately cultivate some other produce; whereas, had the manufactured cloth been in want of buyers, the artisans would have been ruined before they could have learned some other trade. Spain would be also more independent, because raw materials are not capable of so much improvement as manufactures, and the sale of them is more certain; the profit will also be greater, because it does not require so great a capital to produce flax as to weave linen of an equal value in money.

The

The basis on which Spain ought to build her opulence is agriculture. If therefore the Spanish government, under the idea of improving manufactures, lays heavy duties on any raw material; the consequence will be the same as before, our agriculture will be ruined, and even though that should not happen to the same extent, yet the country will be a considerable loser; for even should the ploughman be turned into an artisan, the produce of his labour will be precarious and uncertain, because there never can be so many purchasers of silks and crystals as of raw materials; a greater capital also is required to establish a manufactory, and the superior skill and knowledge of foreign nations will impede our sale of these articles. Since then it is evident that a quantity of raw materials of equal value to manufactured goods is always more advantageous to any nation, and as Spain possesses a soil capable of affording employment, solely in agriculture, to thrice its present population, supposing it to contain twelve millions, it would be ridiculous to continue the customs to the injury of agriculture for the sake of manufactures, when the former could furnish a more safe and independent employment to thirty-six millions of individuals. To act thus would be the height of folly and stupidity, and mere compliance with that narrow spirit of jealousy, which has hitherto been the sole impulse  
of



of action to all nations. That which becomes every government, is to remove every obstacle to the progress of population and industry. Since it is not possible to find a single instance in which customs do not withdraw a number of useful hands from labour, or fail to injure agriculture solely by the duties on foreign produce, they never can suit a country like Spain, whose soil affords such constant employment to its inhabitants, and whose productions are so various and of so excellent a quality as to be superior to those of all Europe; these alone, supposing her agriculture to be improved to the utmost, ought to make her richer than any other nation.

D. Bernardo War calculates, that in his time Spain had 18,000 leagues square, of her best land uncultivated; and supposing, at the lowest, that one league square would employ two thousand persons, the uncultivated land of Spain would furnish employment to thirty-six millions of persons. To be convinced that this calculation is not exaggerated, the province of Biscay, which is in general the worst land in the Peninsula, in forty-three leagues square, of which it is composed, gives subsistence to 110,000 persons, which is 2,400 for each league, and this province has no resources but those of agriculture, because the produce of its iron manufacture, as it is all drawn from its own soil, being raw materials, belongs to  
its

its agriculture, and not to its manufactures. Why then seek for manufactures, and be so desirous to support the fatal system of customs, which costs us so much money, so many hands, and so many wars, even could it answer the end proposed, when we have another source of wealth so much more lucrative, more independent, and more certain. When the uncultivated land of America affords an extension of labour for the production of raw materials, to a population that might be greater than that of all Europe, why support an establishment which impedes that population without any other motive than merely wishing to keep down the industry and improvement of other nations? It is the height of folly and imprudence. No nation in Europe can furnish a quantity of labour in agriculture equal to Spain, because all together they have not so much land, nor so much that is uncultivated, and their population is greater in proportion; for this very reason, no nation can be so much injured by the system of customs as Spain. Other nations may find an excuse for it, in the fear of a want of hands to labour in case of an excessive population, but Spain need have no such apprehension.

The freedom of commerce may, perhaps, excite an alarm in the minds of those who are accustomed to respect all ancient institutions, but it can never intimidate those who judge of nothing  
 N without

without a previous examination, and from conviction of its consequences. Should the subject be placed in a light sufficiently clear, every thing may be expected from the fathers of their country, chosen not to confirm abuses, but to enact the reforms which the nation requires. Every thing may be expected from men who have given such proofs of their probity, their zeal for justice, and the cause of liberty. Such a measure, besides being the only one which can ensure the prosperity of agriculture, arts, and commerce, will also reconcile the interests not only of Spain and America, but of all other nations, by destroying the seeds of enmity and hatred which impede the general felicity. If Spain was the means of reviving in modern times an establishment which had its origin in the most corrupt period of Roman despotism, and was eagerly adopted by other nations; because it served to render their governments more arbitrary, she ought to aspire to the glory of putting an end to it. If the Spanish government was the first that, in order to subjugate the Spaniards and threaten other nations, invented standing armies at the expence of the laborious part of society, she ought to be the first to abolish an establishment, which it is not possible to continue without increasing the number of these very soldiers, and maintaining in idleness a great portion of the hands that are lost to agriculture

culture and commerce; she is the first who ought to attempt to quiesce other nations; as to the erroneous system which she caused them to adopt, and with which they all aimed at being rich, but which is of no other use than to make them rich (increase the number of idle hands, and consequently can only create dissensions and poverty). The liberty I have spoken of will cover its authors with glory, and confound all those who, profaning the sacred name of liberty, seek only to foment the insurrection of America, talking to them of independence and freedom of commerce, of which they know nothing but the name, as all nations have hitherto acted despotically towards each other, and acknowledged no law but that of force.

On the interest of our allies in the pacification of America, I will not suffer myself to be led astray by the love of my country, without any other motive. I will not imitate the partial and impolitic conduct of some English writers, who might almost be considered as in the interest of the great enemy of human nature, with the design of fomenting the division between the allied nations; if we did not know the lengths to which men will go when they are solely under the influence of national pride, of avarice, or any other violent passion. I will follow the example of those judicious Englishmen who, doing all the justice to

N 2

the

the Spaniards which they deserve, seek not the preservation of their own happiness in ruining that of their ally, the natural friend of England, in aiding her to shake off the threatened dominion whose power and ambition threatens all Europe. I will be brief, for the mode which I mean to propose of reconciling the interests of Spain and America, is that which equally suits the interests of our allies, for the interests of nations are never in opposition but when they seek to act unjustly.

The interests of our allies in the pacification of America may be considered in a political light, and also in a light merely economical. In examining the subject politically, it is a principle not less false than unjust, that one nation should look with indifference on the ruin of another; but such is the spirit of envy and jealousy, that nothing can undeceive them. It was this iniquitous policy which caused the ruin of all the great states of antiquity. The same conduct has afforded frequent lessons to all governments under the usurped dominion of Napoleon, they have all been the victims of this detestable morality. Low and groveling passions and paltry private interests have caused all of them to forget the main object and hindered them from cordially uniting against the unmeasurable ambition of that daring adventurer, who well knew how to introduce and foment the seeds of discord and division, and thus subjugate those



those whom he had disunited. His Berlin and Milan decrees, so ruinous to all nations, and so scrupulously observed by his tributary states, shew the fascinating power of this usurper, and prove how completely he has overturned the political balance of Europe. England is the only nation which has gloriously supported the contest, and which by its natural situation is enabled to support it, rather than submit to an ignominious peace. In this state of things Napoleon, by the peace of Tilsit, having ensured the tranquillity of the north, employed himself solely in acquiring the dominion over Spain, of whose government he got possession by means the most artful and insidious. The Spanish people, without being alarmed at the dangers which threatened them, and without having time to arrange their measures for the most glorious enterprise the world ever saw, resolved rather to perish in the struggle than submit to an odious and unprincipled usurper.—Whatever were their motives for this heroic determination, they deserved to be crowned with universal applause, and exempt from the severity of criticism.

If the first news of this noble resolution astonished those who were unacquainted with the Spanish character, the first events of the contest must have surprised all Europe, without even excepting those who believe in the omnipotence

omnipotence! of the tyrant, whose throne they shook in no small degree, and filled with joy all the friends of liberty, of whom there are not a few in France. The cause of the Spaniards was the cause of England, and for that reason she did not hesitate a moment to send over powerful succours. Whoever does his duty has a claim to be esteemed; the English government deserves the greatest praise for the liberality of its conduct, but we must not be led astray by flattery or national spirit; the English government did not defend only the cause of Spain, it defended its own cause; it fought against the enemy of both nations. What would have been the situation of Great Britain at this moment, if Napoleon, being more politic, or the Spaniards, less brave, Spain had fallen under his dominion? If he had got possession of the Peninsula, what power on the continent could have arrested the progress of his conquests? And when master of the continent, how could England have resisted his force? At a time when the existence of England was not near so much endangered, hardly any judicious Englishman dared to contemplate the future lot of his country. Had the continent been wholly in the power of Napoleon, what could have hindered him sending army after army for the subjugation of England? Even supposing that the British fleets were able to frustrate his attempts, yet, when all the ports of

of Europe and America were shut to her vessels, how could England long be able to maintain the contest? Without commerce her industry would perish, her people would be ruined, and the government in a few years would have no means of maintaining her army and navy. The only resource remaining would be a peace more dangerous than war; for all who are acquainted with the unmeasurable ambition of Napoleon must be convinced that in such a peace he would not allow her to preserve her maritime dominion, nor even her independence, and should he even grant her terms apparently honorable, who is to guarantee them, or what confidence could be placed in his promises, after his perfidious conduct to the court of Spain? Who can doubt that even if his treaty of peace were sincere, he would not during that period, be forming squadrons and armies for her future subjugation? History does not afford a single instance of a nation which has not abused its power, much less can it be expected that a man who has acquired so much, and by such means should fail to follow the example of others less wicked than himself. England can only hope to preserve her independence when she sees the balance of power in some measure restored on the continent. It is not sufficient that Napoleon should die, it is requisite that his successor should not possess the same power. All nations are ambitious,

ambitious, and if the aggrandisement of one is not restrained by the power of others, their security will always be precarious and uncertain.

Spain is the only nation of the continent that possessed virtue and valour sufficient to oppose the Colossus that "bestrode"\* the rest. She went to war not for the sake of conquest or ambitious treaties of commerce, it was solely to secure her political existence, and with that, the liberty of all other nations that wished to be independent. England, who was yet free, and had spared no exertions to preserve her liberty, could not but admire her efforts, and contribute to support a cause which was also her own. Had she acted otherwise, she would have sacrificed her own independence; her conduct, therefore, was dictated by sound policy.—The first successes of the Spaniards filled both them and their allies with a vain and imprudent confidence, but it was more from the effect of error or inexperience in the art of war, than the want of patriotism, that this first period of success was short and transient. Their reverses began when Napoleon found it requisite to reinforce his armies in the Peninsula. His progress was then like lightning, and his triumphs were considered secure, because he reckoned only on contending with regular armies. The troops which had defended the good cause were suddenly dispersed, and those

\* Shakspeare's Cæsar.

of

of our allies thought they could only be saved by retiring from the continent. The general opinion began to return again to the invincibility of Napoleon, and considered all further opposition to him as rash and ineffectual. Those writers, who either through an ill founded prepossession or being in the pay of Napoleon, argued against the cause of Spain, attempted to dissuade the English government from supporting a cause which could no longer be supported. The spirit of discord began to unveil itself, and the effects of it were alarming. "The Spaniards," said these men, "are no longer worthy of support; they are actuated solely by superstition and a love of despotism; it is impossible they can succeed." To support their arguments they quoted the dispatches of General Moore. Experience has fully refuted the erroneous ideas that officer had formed of the Spaniards, which he alleged as the chief cause of his retreat. Those superstitious, enslaved, and object Spaniards, when left to themselves, resisted the whole French force before which Gen. Moore retreated, and the Gallicians alone annihilated that army in a few months, which had caused such terror to the English commander, and since that time there has not been a single French soldier in the province of Galicia; this is a fact, and facts speak for themselves.

The perseverance of the Spaniards in following  
up



up the struggle, notwithstanding all the reverses they experienced, ought to reduce to silence all those who have attempted to sow among them the seeds of dissension. The Spaniards did not promise to be uniformly successful; they only promised to resist the dominion of the tyrant; they have fulfilled their noble resolution, and it was ungenerous to reproach them with their misfortunes; and yet from the first moment of their reverses, the number of those has increased who oppose their cause, and counsel its abandonment. At length arose the American insurrection, which was characterised with every mark of a horrible faction, as its authors acted without any authorised power, and threatened with robbery and assassination all who refused to join their party, thus shewing evident signs of acting under the influence of Napoleon. It is sufficient to know that it is consistent with the designs of the perfidious usurper to stigmatise every lover of freedom and every free nation. The English, in consequence of their attachment to the fatal system we have attempted to expose, could not but view with exultation the news from America, so calamitous to Spain. Even the moderate party in England not only wish for the separation of America, but openly speak in its defence. It is a situation too critical, and an occasion too fearful for any schism to arise between us and Great Britain,

Britain, whose interests are so closely united, considering the critical state of Europe and the conduct of all other nations. In the eye of sound policy England can derive no advantage from the separation of Spain and America. Should Spain be so impolitic as to wish for the separation of Ireland and Scotland from England, even that would be no reason for England wishing the separation of the others, considering that America is indispensable to Spain in her present contest, and considering how much the cause of Britain and Spain are one. It is this disunion, this want of reciprocity which has caused the failure of all the coalitions against France, which might otherwise have restrained its empire. The friendship of Spain is not only desirable for England, but at all times, without America, she cannot free herself from the yoke of France; and under the power of France she cannot be the friend of Great Britain, but she never can otherwise be free and independent. The separation of Spain from her colonies can never be advantageous to Great Britain, unless she should overturn the balance of power on the continent, but while she wishes only to maintain her independance, the integrity of her dominions, can be no injury to Great Britain, but the reverse. Nothing would be more wise and more just than for both nations mutually to revise and correct

rect their military errors, but nothing can be more impolitic and injurious than for the writers of each nation to reproach each other publicly with these errors and mistakes; it can only serve to produce hatred and dissension, and promote the designs of the enemy; nothing in my opinion can be more imprudent than the conduct of many English writers, who censure all the operations, and claim for the British the whole merit of every glorious achievement; both have enough to boast of and to amend. The nation which justly deserves the tribute due to virtue and glory, forfeits that claim when it aspires to unmerited praise. Moderation, so far from diminishing its claims, will exalt them, and preserve that harmony which is indispensable between the two countries. —If the Spaniards in general have shewn great want of discipline, and some individuals have been traitors to their country, it cannot be denied that the valour and patriotism of the nation have supported and will support it in this most terrible conflict. Though England has the glory of maintaining its own army and that of the Portuguese, which have contributed to restrain the progress of the enemy, doubtless in the eyes of every impartial person she has committed errors the most fatal to the general cause, such as the convention of Cintra and the retreat of General Moore.

Moore. It becomes each nation therefore to act with decorum and generosity, and restrain the emotions of ambition and resentment. While the Spaniards retain their present dignity of sentiment and spirit of liberty, they will be invincible either with discipline or without it. Although I consider it as a matter of the greatest importance to have able Generals, in order to drive the enemy from the Peninsula, yet, the armies of Napoleon, commanded by Generals expert in military science, the fruit of twenty years experience, which neither Spanish nor English officers could possess, the armies of Napoleon would have soon been masters of the countries if they had not been opposed by a people resolutely determined to resist their dominion. How much soever the wise conduct of that great General who now commands the British army may have contributed to the freedom of Portugal, England could never have attempted to restore its ally to her dominions without the insurrection of Spain; nor would the army of Massena been in want of provisions, had not the Spanish guerillas intercepted his convoys, for the English army in his front could only oppose him by the most skilful manœuvres, not having force sufficient to meet him in the open field. Though the skill of the British General and the valour and discipline of the British troops are

are not to be disputed, it would be a very impolitic attempt to think of placing the Spanish troops under the English command; it would be an instance of base condescension to the English in any Spaniard to propose it; and an insufferable instance of national pride in the English to demand it. If the English armies know how to obtain victories, the Spanish do the same, both deserve the greatest praise, and each nation ought to command its own troops. What Englishman would not be indignant at a similar proposal? The Spaniards will either not submit to be commanded by English officers, or, if they do, their enthusiasm, which has hitherto supported their cause, will be forever extinguished; and should the whole Spanish force be placed in the hands of one man, who will ensure the liberty for which they are contending? Would they have any other security for it than the virtue of that individual? A people jealous of their liberty can never approve such a measure, whatever thoughtless and shallow men may say! It is not sufficient to confide in the disposition of those who are in power, the law should provide that they cannot abuse it. The Cortez itself is not empowered to do any act against the liberty of the nation.

The measure which I have proposed for uniting the  
the



the interests of Spain and America, is conformable to the interests of the English and all other nations, considered as a subject of political economy, and I think I have said sufficient to dispense with the necessity of bringing further proofs of it. Although nations, actuated by low and selfish ideas, may think only of their own insulated happiness amidst the ruin of others, yet every sensible man will nevertheless disapprove their conduct and perceive its evil tendency. Should Spain conclude with England such a treaty of commerce as America might grant her singly, England will gain nothing by the emancipation of America. If Spain acquires liberty and independence, Great Britain will not the less enjoy the commerce of America, but if Napoleon conquers the Peninsula, England cannot hope to obtain that commerce, nor if she should, would it be of much consequence. But even if England should not enjoy that commerce, and America should not be emancipated, she ought to make great sacrifices to secure the independence of the Peninsula, otherwise her own will be threatened on all sides. She will either compel Spain to play a desperate part and reject her friendship, or merely make use of it to drive her enemies from her territory. Napoleon in this respect is wiser than his enemies, he will spare no sacrifices to obtain his great object; he knows that the possession of the Peninsula

Peninsula is worth more than all his former conquests, and will give up any thing to forward his purpose and realise his ultimate views. And can England, knowing this, (with the vain and paltry hope of obtaining the commerce of America) sacrifice the real advantage of enjoying the friendship and independence of the Peninsula? But should her people, actuated by a mere mercantile spirit, see no other advantage than that which arises from commerce, let them know that the friendship of Spain is of more worth to them than fifty Americas, or even than all the rest of the continent. Let them know that Spain is a market in which they may have twelve millions of persons, who will consume their manufactures, when they cannot expect more than two millions in America; a number which can hardly ever increase, because the people, on account of the climate, can never be general consumers of English produce and manufactures. Finally, let them know of how much value the friendship of Spain is to Great Britain by consulting the present state of their customs. In 1809, notwithstanding all the ports of Europe, except those of Spain, were shut to her, by the Berlin and Milan decrees, her exports amounted to the enormous sum of 50,301,763 pounds weight of goods, though in one of the five years before, 1806, when all the ports of Europe were open to her except those of France and Spain,

Spain, they did not amount to more than 36,527,184 pounds. That is to say, that Spain consumes more of English goods than any other nation of the world, because, in the year 1809, the English had no commerce with the foreign dominions of Spain. Even in an interested view such a friendship ought not to be rejected by the English for that which is not of half its worth. Notwithstanding these undeniable facts, there are Englishmen who, under the pretence of philanthropy, wish the separation of Spain and America, as if the Americans were in danger of being reduced to the condition of slaves; and others from a want both of knowledge and generosity, persuade themselves that England would derive great advantages from the separation of America; but these advantages exist only in her own ideas, and the evils which would follow from losing the friendship of Spain or from her subjugation, can only be hidden from the English by the most thoughtless inattention, or the intoxication of national vanity. The Spanish people will never sacrifice themselves voluntarily to become slaves, they are jealous of their dignity, and well know the duties of friendship and an honourable alliance. The Spanish people, whose character is marked even towards their rivals with the most exalted generosity and good faith, cannot but be indignant at any means that are used to foment the insurrection of America.

O

rica.

rica. There is no medium, Great Britain must either forbear to impede the union and pacification of our American dominions, or she must incur the risk of losing the friendship of Spain, because both the Spanish government and the Spanish people consider her as having promised to guarantee the integrity of the Spanish empire. Justice, which can never be in opposition to the interests of any nation or individual; justice, which is the only principle capable of reconciling the interests of all, cannot see, without horror, a germ of dissension, which will be the precursor of ruin; she is the only deity which possesses a sovereign right to determine the disputes of all men, all cities, and all societies; she is the oracle which ought to dictate to all who honestly consult her, those fixed principles which constitute the happiness of all men and nations. Representatives of the Spanish people, you, who are interpreters of the laws of that deity; you, whose sacred office is to express her will and no other, you, I say, ought to know that she allows not her gifts to be distributed exclusively; nor with any other preference than that of merit. Every member of society is indebted to her kindness.

Even had the exclusive commerce with America been an advantage to Spain, to know that it was unjust would be a sufficient motive for you to abolish it. The Spaniards and Americans are  
 individuals

individuals of the same society, and, as such, they ought all to enjoy the same privileges. Even though it were advantageous for a nation to become rich by depriving her citizens of the liberty to dispose of the fruits of their labour at their own pleasure, it would be a sufficient motive for you to abolish such a practice without hesitation; it would be sufficient for you to know the multiplied acts of vexation and injustice which were committed by the agents and judges of the revenue, for you to put an end to the monopolies and customs which were the cause of all the oppressions. The most precious right which man possesses in society, after that of personal liberty, is the right of private property, a right which is only enjoyed when every man is at complete liberty to dispose of the fruits of his labour without restraint or difficulty. When the Americans and the Spaniards equally enjoy this right, then they may be said to have advanced considerably in civilization, then will their population increase, and in the same proportion, then will the defenders and supporters of the state be also increased. — When they enjoy this liberty, then will more hands be employed in agriculture and industry; commerce will then be more active, and the greater value will the productions of our soil acquire. In the room of indigence, discontent, and despotism, which have hitherto prevailed, there shall be  
 O 2  opulence,



opulence, cheerfulness, and justice, the inseparable companions of liberty, will every where be seen. Render the two nations happy by means of liberty, and the seditious spirits which now exist in America, will soon either be left to themselves, or if they increase in number, they will all become the just objects of public indignation.

Americans, suffer not yourselves to be led astray by those who, under pretence of your happiness, seek only to satisfy their own ambition, pride, and personal resentment; suffer not yourselves to be deceived by the empty sounds of *liberty* and independence. Know that the man who wishes and deserves to be free, is the most ready to submit to the law, and whatever best promote the happiness of his country, since without that he knows it is impossible to be certain of his life and property. Know that no man in society can be wholly independent, because to be dependent means to be in need of something, and man in society has need of laws to regulate the conduct of his fellow citizens, he has need of a government to execute these laws, he has need of the labourer to procure him food, he has need of the manufacturer to provide him clothes, he has need of the merchant to sell them, he has need of the public force to defend him from his enemies, external and internal, and consequently, being in need

need of all these, he cannot be independent, and will be less so, in proportion to the weakness of the state and the smaller number of individuals that compose it. If the whole world formed but one political family, all men would be independent, because they would then be free from external enemies. Those therefore who tell you to separate yourselves from the Spaniards, under independence, give you advice which will make you much more dependent. If they regarded your liberty, they would not speak to you of separation, as they do not speak of it to their fellow citizens who live in other provinces, who enjoy not those rights which these men think they ought to enjoy, although they promise them the same as their fellow citizens. If this language was just, or was used from a desire of a just recompense, all nations and all people would find motives to rise and separate themselves from the society to which they belong, because there is no country in the world where there are not abuses, and where there is not need of reform. In order to be free and happy, it is not requisite for the members of different societies to be divided, for such a spirit shews that they are under the influence of a faction. Above all, Americans, at this time when the Spanish government, if it has not granted you all the rights of freemen, has at least granted such as no country ever granted before  
to

to its colonies, at a time when the Spaniards are exposed to all the horrors of a cruel and unjust war, in defence of their liberty, and yours, and that of all other nations; at a time when you spontaneously offered to give all the aid in your power; at this very time, I say, is it possible that you should suffer yourselves to be led away, by perfidious seductions, to separate yourselves from us, and afford an easy triumph to the man who seeks to tyrannise over the whole human race, and spend that blood and treasure against your own brethren which your country requires you to employ against the common enemy of us all? — Listen to the quiet dictates of conscience, give no ear, even for a moment, to the revolutioners who have got possession of your government, which they wish not to give up, because they wish to rule over you, and they will not give it up till you perform your duty, and learn to detest those who, without any legal power, abuse your candour, and seek to stain the cause of liberty with the blood of all those who refuse to submit to their usurped authority.

Allies of the great cause of the Peninsula, although justice in any other situation might authorise you to look with indifference on the civil war of the Americans, yet the present state of things requires that you should attempt to put an end to it. You should not look with indifference

ence

ence on that which tends to promote the views of your greatest enemy. Not to contribute to this pacification is to co-operate with your determined foe. Examine the history of the world, and you will not find an instance in which any nation ever repented of being just and generous. The common interest of all nations cannot, or ought not to be subject to the caprice of the passions. The generous alliance which ought to subsist between nations of immense power, should never suffer them to be led astray by any passion so contemptible as that of jealousy, but in a state of things like the present they ought to sacrifice all private considerations to that of resisting the great Colossus which threatens to overpower them all.— Nations as well as individuals ought to be actuated by the maxims of sound reason, which declare, that that which is just alone is useful, and that that only is useful which injures no one.

**THE END.**

---

Charles Squire, Printer,  
Furnival's-Inn-Court, London.



*Lately published by the same Author.*

---

**1. A CONSTITUTION for the SPANISH NATION:** Presented to the Supreme Junta of Spain and the Indies, Nov. 1, 1809, by ALVARO FLOREZ ESTRELLADA, Attorney-General of the Principality of Asturias. Translated from the Original by W. BURDON. 8vo. Price 2s.

**2. INTRODUCTION to the HISTORY of the REVOLUTION of SPAIN:** Translated by W. BURDON. 8vo. Price 5s.





